THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD,

A TALE,

BY DR. GOLDSMITH.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

Sperate miseri, cavete felices.

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THE

VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

CHAP. I.

The hiſtory of a philoſophic vagabond, purſuing novelty, but loſing content.

AFTER we had ſupped, Mrs. Arnold politely offered to ſend a couple of her footmen for my ſon's baggage, which he at firſt ſeemed to decline; but upon her preſſing the requeſt, he was obliged to inform her, that a ſtick and a wallet were all the moveable things upon this earth which he could boaſt of. 'Why, aye, 'my ſon,' cried I, 'you left me but poor; and poor 'I find, you are come back: and yet, I make no 'doubt, you have ſeen a great deal of the world.'----- 'Yes, Sir,' replied my ſon, 'but travelling after 'Fortune is not the way to ſecure her; and, indeed, of 'late, I have deſiſted from the purſuit.'---'I fancy, 'Sir,' cried Mrs. Arnold, 'that the account of your 'adventures would be amuſing: the firſt part of them 'I have often heard from my niece; but could the 'company prevail for the reſt, it would be an additi'onal obligation.'---'Madam,' replied my ſon, 'I 'promiſe you the pleaſure you have in hearing, will 'not be half ſo great as my vanity in repeating them; 'and yet in the whole narrative I can ſcarce promiſe 'you one adventure, as my account is rather of what 'I ſaw, than what I did. The firſt misfortune 'of my life, which you all know, was great; but 'though it diſtreſſed, it could not ſink me. No perſon 'ever had a better knack at hoping than I. The leſs 'kind I found Fortune at one time, the more I ex'pected from her another; and being now at the bot'tom of her wheel, every new revolution might lift, 'but could not depreſs me. I proceeded therefore,

'towards London in a fine morning, no way uneasy 'about to-morrow, but chearful as the birds that carolled by the road; and comforted myself with reflecting, that London was the mart where abilities of 'every kind were sure of meeting distinction and reward.

'Upon my arrival in town, Sir, my first care was to 'deliver your letter of recommendation to our cousin, 'who was himself in little better circumstances than I. 'My first scheme, you know, Sir, was to be usher at 'an academy, and I asked his advice on the affair. 'Our cousin received the proposal with a true Sardonic 'grin. "Aye," cried he, "this is, indeed, a very "pretty career that has been chalked out for you. I "have been an usher to a boarding school myself: and "may I die by an anodyne necklace, but I had rather "be an under-turnkey in Newgate! I was up early "and late: I was brow-beat by the master, hated for "my ugly face by the mistress, worried by the boys "within, and never permitted to stir out to meet civility abroad. But are you sure you are fit for a "school? Let me examine you a little. Have you "been bred an apprentice to the business?" No. "Then you won't do for a school. Can you dress "the boys hair?" No. "Then you won't do for a "school. Have you had the small pox?" No. "Then "you won't do for a school. Can you lie three in a "bed?" No. "Then you will never do for a school. "Have you got a good stomach!" Yes. "Then "you will by no means do for a school. No, Sir: "if you are for a genteel, easy profession, bind yourself seven years as an apprentice to turn a cutler's "wheel; but avoid a school by any means.——Yet "come," continued he, "I see you are a lad of spirit "and some learning; what do you think of commencing author like me? You have read in books, "no doubt, of men of genius starving at the trade; "at present I'll shew you forty very dull fellows about "town that live by it in opulence. All honest jog trot "men, who go on smoothly and dully, and write

history

" history and politics, and are praised: men, Sir, " who, had they been bred coblers, would all their " lives have only mended shoes, but never made them."

'Finding that there was no degree of gentility affixed to the character of an usher, I resolved to accept his proposal; and having the highest respect for literature, hailed the antiqua mater of Grub Street with reverence. I thought it my glory to pursue a track which Dryden and Otway trod before me. I considered the goddess of this region as the parent of excellence; and, however an intercourse with the world might give us good-sense, the poverty she granted I supposed to be the nurse of genius! Big with these reflections, I sat down, and finding that the best things remained to be said on the wrong side, I resolved to write a book that should be wholly new. I therefore dressed up three paradoxes with some ingenuity. They were false, indeed, but they were new. The jewels of truth have been so often imported by others, that nothing was left for me to import, but some splendid things that at a distance looked every bit as well. Witness, you powers, what fancied importance sate perched upon my quill while I was writing! The whole learned world, I made no doubt, would rise to oppose my systems; but then I was prepared to oppose the whole learned world. Like the porcupine, I sate self-collected, with a quill pointed against every opposer.'

'Well said, my boy,' cried I; 'and what subject did you treat upon? I hope you did not pass over the importance of monogamy. But I interrupt: go on. You published your paradoxes; well, and what did the learned world say to your paradoxes?'

'Sir,' replied my son, 'the learned world said nothing to my paradoxes; nothing at all, Sir. Every man of them was employed in praising his friends and himself; or condemning his enemies: and unfortunately, as I had neither, I suffered the cruellest mortification, neglect.

'As I was meditating one day, in a coffee-house, 'on the fate of my paradoxes, a little man happening 'to enter the room, placed himſelf in the box before 'me; and after ſome preliminary diſcourſe, finding me 'to be a ſcholar, drew out a bundle of propoſals, beg- 'ging me to ſubſcribe to a new edition he was going 'to give the world of Propertius, with notes. This 'demand neceſſarily produced a reply that I had no 'money; and that conceſſion led him to enquire into 'the nature of my expectations. Finding that my ex- 'pectations were juſt as great as my purſe---"I ſee," 'cried he, "you are unacquainted with the town. I'll "teach you a part of it. Look at theſe propoſals; "upon theſe very propoſals I have ſubſiſted very com- "fortably for twelve years. The moment a nobleman "returns from his travels, a Creolian arrives from "Jamaica, or a dowager from her country-ſeat, I "ſtrike for a ſubſcription. I firſt beſiege their hearts "with flattery, and then pour in my propoſals at the "breach. If they ſubſcribe readily the firſt time, I "renew my requeſt to beg a dedication fee; if they "let me have that, I ſmite them once more for en- "graving their coat of arms at the top. Thus," 'continued he, "I live by vanity, and laugh at it. "but between ourſelves, I am now too well known, I "ſhould be glad to borrow your face a bit: a noble- "man of diſtinction has juſt returned from Italy; my "face is familiar to his porter; but if you bring this "copy of verſes, my life for it you ſucceed, and we "divide the ſpoil."

'Bleſs us, George,' cried I, 'and is this the em- 'ployment of poets now? Do men of their exalted 'talents thus ſtoop to beggary! Can they ſo far diſ- 'grace their calling, as to make a vile traffic of praiſe 'for bread?'

'O no, Sir,' returned he; 'a true poet can never 'be ſo baſe; for wherever there is genius there is 'pride. The creatures I now deſcribe are only beg- 'gars in rhyme. The real poet, as he braves every

hardſhip

'hardſhip for fame, ſo is he equally a coward to con-
'tempt, and none but thoſe who are unworthy protec-
'tion, condeſcend to ſolicit it.

'Having a mind too proud to ſtoop to ſuch indig-
'nities, and yet a fortune too humble to hazard a
'ſecond attempt for fame, I was now obliged to take
'a middle courſe, and write for bread. But I was un-
'qualified for a profeſſion where mere induſtry alone
'was to enſure ſucceſs. I could not ſuppreſs my lurk-
'ing paſſion for applauſe; but uſually conſumed that
'time in efforts after excellence which takes up but
'little room, when it ſhould have been more advan-
'tageouſly employed in the diffuſive productions of
'fruitful mediocrity. My little piece would therefore
'come forth in the midſt of periodical publications,
'unnoticed and unknown. The public were more im-
'portantly employed than to obſerve the eaſy ſimpli-
'city of my ſtyle, or the harmony of my periods.
'Sheet after ſheet was thrown off to oblivion. My
'eſſays were buried among the eſſays upon liberty,
'eaſtern tales, and cures for the bite of a mad dog;
'while Philautus, Philalethes, Phileutheros, and Phi-
'lanthropos, all wrote better, becauſe they wrote
'faſter than I.

'Now, therefore, I began to aſſociate with none but
'diſappointed authors, like myſelf, who praiſed, de-
'plored, and deſpiſed each other. The ſatisfaction we
'found in every celebrated writer's attempts, was in-
'verſely as their merits. I found that no genius in
'another could pleaſe me. My unfortunate paradoxes
'had entirely dried up that ſource of comfort. I could
'neither read nor write with ſatisfaction; for excel-
'lence in another was my averſion, and writing was
'my trade.

'In the midſt of theſe gloomy reflections, as I was
'one day ſitting on a bench in St. James's-Park, a
'young gentleman of diſtinction, who had been my
'intimate acquaintance at the univerſity, approached
'me. We ſaluted each other with ſome heſitation, he

'almoſt

'almost ashamed of being known to one who made so 'shabby an appearance, and I afraid of a repulse. But 'my suspicions soon vanished; for Ned Thornhill was 'at the bottom a very good-natured fellow.'

'What did you say George?' interrupted I. 'Thornhill! was not that his name? It can certainly be no 'other than my landlord.'---'Bless me,' cried Mrs, Arnold, 'is Mr. Thornhill so near a neighbour of 'yours? He has long been a friend in our family, and 'we expect a visit from him shortly.'

'My friend's first care,' continued my son, 'was 'to alter my appearance by a very fine suit of his own 'cloaths, and then I was admitted to his table upon 'the footing of half friend, half underling. My business was to attend him at auctions, to put him in 'spirits when he sat for his picture, to take the left-hand in his chariot when not filled by another, and 'to assist at tattering a kip, as the phrase was, when 'he had a mind for a frolic. Besides this, I had 'twenty other little employments in the family. I 'was to do many small things without bidding; to 'carry the cork-screw; to stand god-father to all the 'butler's children; to sing when I was bid: to be 'never out of humour; always to be humble; and if 'I could, to be very happy.

'In this honourable post, however, I was not without a rival. A captain of Marines, who was formed 'for the place by nature, opposed me in my patron's 'affections. His mother had been laundress to a man 'of quality, and thus he early acquired a taste for 'pimping and pedigree. As this gentleman made it 'the study of his life to be acquainted with lords, 'though he was dismissed from several for his stupidity, 'yet he found many of them, who were as dull as himself, that permitted his assiduities. As flattery was 'his trade, he practised it with the easiest address imaginable; but it came aukward and stiff from me; and 'as every day my patron's desire of flattery increased, 'so every hour, being better acquainted with his de-

' fects, I became more unwilling to give it. Thus I
' was once more fairly going to give up the field to the
' captain, when my friend found occaſion for my aſſiſt-
' ance. This was nothing leſs than to fight a duel for
' him with a gentleman whoſe ſiſter it was pretended
' he had uſed ill. I readily complied with his requeſt;
' and though I ſee you are diſpleaſed at my conduct,
' yet as it was a debt indiſpenſibly due to his friend-
' ſhip, I could not refuſe. I undertook the affair, diſ-
' armed my antagoniſt, and ſoon after had the pleaſure
' of finding that the lady was only a woman of the
' town, and the fellow her bully and a ſharper. This
' piece of ſervice was repaid with the warmeſt profeſ-
' ſions of gratitude; but as my friend was to leave
' town in a few days, he knew no other method of
' ſerving me, but by recommending me to his uncle
' Sir William Thornhill, and another nobleman of
' great diſtinction, who enjoyed a poſt under the go-
' vernment. When he was gone, my firſt care was
' to carry his recommendatory letter to his uncle, a
' man whoſe character for every virtue was univerſal,
' yet juſt. I was received by his ſervants with the moſt
' hoſpitable ſmiles; for the looks of the domeſtics ever
' tranſmit their maſter's benevolence. Being ſhewn
' into a grand apartment, where Sir William ſoon came
' to me, I delivered my meſſage and letter, which he
' read, and after pauſing ſome minutes—" Pray, Sir,"
' cried he, " inform me what you have done for my
" kinſman, to deſerve this warm recommendation?
" But I ſuppoſe, Sir, I gueſs your merits, you have
" fought for him; and ſo you would expect a reward
" from me for being the inſtrument of his vices. I
" wiſh, ſincerely wiſh, that my preſent refuſal may be
" ſome puniſhment for your guilt; but ſtill more, that
" it may be ſome inducement to your repentance."
' The ſeverity of this rebuke I bore patiently, becauſe
' I knew it was juſt. My whole expectations now
' lay in my letter to the great man. As the doors of
' the nobility are almoſt ever beſet with beggars, all

' ready

'ready to thruſt in ſome ſly petition, I found it no
'eaſy matter to gain admittance. However, after
'bribing the ſervants with half my worldly fortune, I
'was at laſt ſhewn into a ſpacious apartment, my let-
'ter being previouſly ſent up for his lordſhip's inſpec-
'tion. During this anxious interval I had full time
'to look round me. Every thing was grand and of
'happy contrivance; the paintings, the furniture, the
'gilding, petrified me with awe, and raiſed my idea of
'the owner. Ah, thought I to myſelf, how very great
'muſt the poſſeſſor of all theſe things be, who carries
'in his head the buſineſs of the ſtate, and whoſe houſe
'diſplays half the wealth of the kingdom; ſure his
'genius muſt be unfathomable! During theſe awful
'reflections I heard a ſtep come heavily forward. Ah,
'this is the great man himſelf! No, it was only a
'chamber-maid. Another foot was heard ſoon after.
'This muſt be he! No, it was only the great man's
'valet de chambre. At laſt his lordſhip actually made
'his appearance. "Are you," cried he, "the bearer
"of this here letter?" I anſwered with a bow. "I
"learn by this," continued he, "as how that----"
'But juſt at that inſtant a ſervant delivered him a card;
'and without taking further notice, he went out of the
'room, and left me to digeſt my own happineſs at lei-
'ſure. I ſaw no more of him, till told by a footman
'that his lordſhip was going to his coach at the door.
'Down I immediately followed, and joined my voice to
'that of three or four more, who came like me to pe-
'tition for favours. His lordſhip, however, went too
'faſt for us, and was gaining his chariot-door with
'large ſtrides, when I hallooed out to know if I
'was to have any reply. He was by this time got in,
'and muttered an anſwer, half of which I only heard,
'the other half was loſt in the rattling of the chariot-
'wheels. I ſtood for ſome time with my neck ſtretched
'out, in the poſture of one that was liſtening to catch
'the glorious ſounds, till, looking round me, I found
'myſelf alone at his lordſhip's gate. 'My

'My patience,' continued my son, 'was now quite 'exhausted: stung with the thousand indignities I 'had met with, I was willing to cast myself away, 'and only wanted the gulph to receive me. I re- 'garded myself as one of those vile things that nature 'designed should be thrown by into her lumber-room, 'there to perish in obscurity. I had still, however, 'half a guinea left, and of that I thought nature her-self should not deprive me; but in order to be sure of this, I was resolved to go instantly and spend it 'while I had it, and then trust to occurrences for the 'rest. As I was going along with this resolution, it 'happened that Mr. Crispe's Office seemed invitingly 'open to give me a welcome reception. In this office 'Mr. Crispe kindly offers all his Majesty's subjects a 'generous promise of 30l. a year, for which promise 'all they give in return is their liberty for life, and 'permission to let him transport them to America as 'slaves. I was happy at finding a place where I could 'lose my fears in desperation, and entered this cell, 'for it had the appearance of one, with the devotion 'of a monastic. Here I found a number of poor 'creatures all in circumstances like myself, expecting 'the arrival of Mr. Crispe, presenting a true epi- 'tome of English impatience. Each untractable soul 'at variance with fortune, wreaked her injuries on 'their own hearts: but Mr. Crispe at last came down, 'which hushed our murmurs. He deigned to regard 'me with an air of peculiar approbation, and indeed 'he was the first man who for a month past talked 'to me with smiles. After a few questions he found 'I was fit for every thing in the world. He paused 'awhile upon the properest means of providing for 'me, and slapping his forehead, as if he had found 'it, assured me, that there was at that time an em- 'bassy talked of from the synod of Pensylvania to 'the Chickasaw Indians, and that he would use his 'interest to get me made secretary. I knew in my 'own heart the fellow lied, and yet his promise gave 'me

' me pleasure, there was something so magnificent in ' the sound. I fairly therefore divided my half guinea, ' one half of which went to be added to his thirty ' thousand pounds, and with the other half I resolved ' to go to the next tavern, to be there more hap' ' than he.

' As I was going out with that resolution, ' met at the door by the captain of a ship with ' I had formerly some little acquaintance, and he ' agreed to be my companion over a bowl of punch. ' As I never chose to make a secret of my circum- ' stances, he assured me that I was upon the very ' point of ruin, in listening to the office-keeper's pro- ' mises: for that he only designed to sell me to the ' plantations. "But," continued he, "I fancy you " might by a much shorter voyage be very easily put " into a very genteel way of bread. Take my advice. " My ship sails to-morrow for Amsterdam; what if " you go in her as a passenger? The moment you lan' " all you have to do is to teach the Dutchmen Engli' " and I'll warrant you'll get pupils and money enoug " I suppose you understand English," added he, " " this, time or the deuce is in it." I confidently assure ' him of that; but expressed a doubt, whether th ' Dutch would be willing to learn English. He ' firmed with an oath that they were fond of it to d ' traction; and upon that affirmation I agreed with hi' ' proposal, and embarked the next day to teach the ' Dutch English in Holland. The wind was fair, our ' voyage short; and after having paid my passage with ' half my moveables, I found myself fallen as from ' the skies, a stranger in one of the principal streets of ' Amsterdam. In this situation I was unwilling to ' let any time pass unemployed in teaching. I ad- ' dressed myself therefore to two or three of those I ' met, whose appearance seemed most promising: but ' it was impossible to make ourselves mutually under- ' stood. It was not till this very moment I recollected, ' that in order to teach Dutchmen English, it was

' necessary

'necessary that they should first teach me Dutch. 'How I came to overlook so obvious an objection, is 'to me amazing; but certain it is I overlooked it.

'This scheme thus blown up, I had some thoughts of fairly shipping back to England again; but happening into company with an Irish student, who was returning from Louvain, our conversation turned upon topics of literature (for, by the way, it may 'be observed, that I always forgot the meanness of 'my circumstances when I could converse upon such 'subjects; from him I learned that there were not 'two men in his whole university who understood 'Greek. This amazed me. I instantly resolved to 'travel to Louvain, and there live by teaching Greek: 'and in this design I was heartened by my brother student, who threw out some hints that a fortune might 'be got by it.

'I set boldly forward the next morning. Every day lessened the burthen of my moveables, like Æsop and his basket of bread; for I paid them for my lodgings to the Dutch as I travelled on. When I came to Louvain, I was resolved not to go sneaking to the lower professors, but openly tendered my talents to the principal himself. I went, had admittance, and offered him my service as a master of the Greek language, which I had been told was a desideratum in his university. The principal seemed at first to 'doubt of my abilities; but of these I offered to convince him, by turning a part of any Greek author 'he could fix upon into Latin. Finding me perfectly earnest in my proposal, he addressed me thus: "You see me, young man," continued he; "I never learned Greek, and I don't find I ever missed it. "I have had a doctor's cap and gown without Greek; "I have ten thousand florins a year without Greek; "I eat heartily without Greek; and in short," continued he, "as I don't know Greek, I do not believe "there is any good in it."

'I was now too far from home to think of return-

‘ ing; ſo I reſolved to go forward. I had ſome ‘ knowledge of muſic, with a tolerable voice; I now ‘ turned what was once my amuſement into a preſent ‘ means of ſubſiſtence. I paſſed among the harmleſs ‘ peaſants in Flanders, and among ſuch of the French ‘ as were poor enough to be very merry; for I ever ‘ found them ſprightly in proportion to their wants. ‘ Whenever I approached a peaſant's houſe towards ‘ night-fall, I played one of my moſt merry tunes, ‘ and that procured me not only a lodging, but ſub- ‘ ſiſtence for the next day. I once or twice attempted ‘ to play for people of faſhion, but they always ‘ thought my performance odious, and never rewarded ‘ me with a trifle. This was to me the moſt extra- ‘ ordinary, as whenever I uſed in better days to play ‘ for company, when playing was my amuſement, ‘ my muſic never failed to throw them into raptures, ‘ and the ladies eſpecially; but as it was now my only ‘ means, it was received with contempt; a proof how ‘ ready the world is to under-rate thoſe talents by ‘ which a man is ſupported.

‘ In this manner I proceeded to Paris, with no de- ‘ ſign but juſt to look about me, and then to go for- ‘ ward. The people of Paris are much fonder o ‘ ſtrangers that have money than of thoſe that hav ‘ wit. As I could not boaſt much of either, I wa ‘ no great favourite. After walking about the tow ‘ four or five days, and ſeeing the outſides of the be ‘ houſes, I was preparing to leave this retreat of vena ‘ hoſpitality; when paſſing through one of the prin ‘ cipal ſtreets, whom ſhould I meet but our couſin ‘ to whom you firſt recommended me! This meetin ‘ was very agreeable to me, and I believe not diſplea ‘ ing to him. He enquired into the nature of m ‘ journey to Paris, and informed me of his own buſi ‘ neſs there, which was to collect pictures, medal ‘ intaglios, and antiques of all kinds for a gentlema ‘ in London, who had juſt ſtept into taſte and a larg ‘ fortune. I was the more ſurprized at ſeeing ou

‘ couſin

'cousin pitched upon for this office, as he himself had 'often assured me he knew nothing of the matter. 'Upon asking how he had been taught the art of *con-* '*noscento* so very suddenly, he assured me that nothing 'was more easy. The whole secret consisted in a 'strict adherence to two rules; the one, always to ob- 'serve, that the picture might have been better if the 'painter had taken more pains; and the other, to 'praise the works of Pietro Perugino. "But," says 'he, "as I once taught you how to be an author in "London, I'll now undertake to instruct you in the "art of picture-buying in Paris."

'With this proposal I very readily closed, as it 'was living; and now all my ambition was to live. 'I went therefore to his lodgings, improved my dress 'by his assistance; and after some time accompanied 'him to auctions of pictures, where the English gentry 'were expected to be purchasers. I was not a little 'surprized at his intimacy with people of the best 'fashion, who referred themselves to his judgment 'upon every picture or medal, as an unerring standard 'of taste. He made very good use of my assistance 'upon these occasions; for when asked his opinion 'he would gravely take me aside and ask mine, shrug, 'look wise, return, and assure the company, that he 'could give no opinion upon an affair of so much im- 'portance. Yet there was sometimes an occasion for 'a more supported assurance. I remember to have 'seen him, after giving his opinion that the colouring 'of a picture was not mellow enough, very delibe- 'rately take a brush with brown varnish that was ac- 'cidentally lying by, and rub it over the piece with 'great composure before all the company, and then 'ask if he had not improved the tints.

'When he had finished his commission in Paris, he 'left me strongly recommended to several men of dis 'tinction, as a person very proper for a travelling tu- 'tor; and after some time I was employed in that 'capacity by a gentleman who brought his ward to

'Paris, in order to ſet him forward on his tour 'through Europe. I was to be the young gentle-'man's governor, but with a promiſe that he ſhould 'always govern himſelf. My pupil in fact under-'ſtood the art of guiding in money concerns much 'better than I. He was heir to a fortune of about 'two hundred thouſand pounds, left him by an uncle 'in the Weſt-Indies; and his guardians, to qualify 'him for the management of it, had bound him ap-'prentice to an attorney. Thus avarice was his pre-'vailing paſſion: all his queſtions on the road were, 'how much money might be ſaved; which was the 'leaſt expenſive courſe of travel; whether any thing 'could be bought that would turn to account when 'diſpoſed of again in London. Such curioſities on 'the way as could be ſeen for nothing he was ready 'enough to look at; but if the ſight of them was to 'be paid for, he uſually aſſerted, that he had been 'told they were not worth ſeeing. He never paid a 'bill that he would not obſerve, how amazingly ex-'penſive travelling was! and all this though he was 'not yet twenty-one. When arrived at Leghorn, as 'we took a walk to look at the port and ſhipping, he 'enquired the expence of the paſſage by ſea home to 'England. This he was informed was but a trifle, 'compared to his returning by land; he was therefore 'unable to withſtand the temptation; ſo paying me 'the ſmall part of my ſalary that was due, he took 'leave, and embarked with only one attendant for 'London.

'I now therefore was left once more upon the world 'at large: but then it was a thing I was uſed to. 'However, my ſkill in muſic could avail me nothing 'in a country where every peaſant was a better mu-'ſician than I; but by this time I had acquired ano-'ther talent which anſwered my purpoſe as well, and 'this was a ſkill in diſputation. In all the foreign 'univerſities and convents there are, upon certain 'days, philoſophical theſes maintained againſt every

'adven-

‘ adventitious diſputant; for which, if the champion ‘ oppoſes with any dexterity, he can claim a gratuity ‘ in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night. In ‘ this manner, therefore, I fought my way towards ‘ England; walked along from city to city; ex- ‘ amined mankind more nearly; and, if I may ſo ex- ‘ preſs it, ſaw both ſides of the picture. My re- ‘ marks, however, are but few: I found that monar- ‘ chy was the beſt government for the poor to live in, ‘ and common-wealths for the rich. I found that ‘ riches in general were in every country another ‘ name for freedom; and that no man is ſo fond of ‘ liberty himſelf, as not to be deſirous of ſubject- ‘ ing the will of ſome individuals in ſociety to his ‘ own.

‘ Upon my arrival in England I reſolved to pay my ‘ reſpects firſt to you, and then to enliſt as a volun- ‘ teer in the firſt expedition that was going forward; ‘ but on my journey down my reſolutions were ‘ changed by meeting an old acquaintance, who I ‘ found belonged to a company of comedians that ‘ were going to make a ſummer campaign in the ‘ country.. The company ſeemed not much to diſap- ‘ prove of me for an aſſociate. They all, however, ‘ apprised me of the importance of the taſk at which ‘ I aimed; that the public was a many-headed mon- ‘ ſter, and that only ſuch as had very good heads ‘ could pleaſe it; that acting was not to be learnt in ‘ a day; and that without ſome traditional ſhrugs, ‘ which had been on the ſtage, and only on the ſtage, ‘ theſe hundred years, I could never pretend to pleaſe. ‘ The next difficulty was in fitting me with parts, as ‘ almoſt every character was in keeping. I was driven ‘ for ſome time from one character to another, till at ‘ laſt Horatio was fixed upon, which the preſence of ‘ the preſent company has happily hindered me from ‘ acting.’

CHAP. II.

The ſhort continuance of friendſhip amongſt the vicious, which is coeval only with mutual ſatisfaction.

MY ſon's account was too long to be delivered at once; the firſt part of it was begun that night, and he was concluding the reſt after dinner the next day, when the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at the door ſeemed to make a pauſe in the general ſatisfaction. The butler, who was now become my friend in the family, informed me in a whiſper, that the ſquire had already made ſome overtures to Miſs Wilmot, and that her aunt and uncle ſeemed highly to approve the match. Upon Mr. Thornhill's entering, he ſeemed, at ſeeing my ſon and me, to ſtart back; but I readily imputed that to ſurprize, and not diſpleaſure. However, upon our advancing to ſalute him, he returned our greeting with the moſt apparent candour; and after a ſhort time, his preſence ſeemed only to increaſe the general good humour.

After tea he called me aſide to enquire after my daughter; but upon my informing him that my enquiry was unſucceſsful, he ſeemed greatly ſurprized; adding, that he had been ſince frequently at my houſe, in order to comfort the reſt of the family, whom he left perfectly well. He then aſked if I had communicated her misfortune to Miſs Wilmot, or my ſon: and upon my replying, that I had not told them as yet, he greatly approved my prudence and precaution, deſiring me by all means to keep it a ſecret: 'For at 'beſt,' cried he, 'it is but divulging one's own in-'famy; and perhaps Miſs Livy may not be ſo guilty 'as we all imagine.' We were here interrupted by a ſervant, who came to aſk the ſquire in to ſtand up at country dances; ſo that he left me quite pleaſed with the intereſt he ſeemed to take in my concerns. His addreſſes, however, to Miſs Wilmot, were too obvi-

ous

ous to be miſtaken; and yet ſhe ſeemed not perfectly pleaſed, but bore them rather in compliance to the will of her aunt, than from real inclination. I had even the ſatisfaction to ſee her laviſh ſome kind looks upon my unfortunate ſon, which the other could neither extort by his fortune nor aſſiduity. Mr. Thornhill's ſeeming compoſure, however, not a little ſurprized me: we had now continued here a week, at the preſſing inſtances of Mr. Arnold: but each day the more tenderneſs Miſs Wilmot ſhewed my ſon, Mr. Thornhill's friendſhip ſeemed proportionably to increaſe for him.

He had formerly made us the moſt kind aſſurances of uſing his intereſt to ſerve the family; but now his generoſity was not confined to promiſes alone; the morning I deſigned for my departure, Mr. Thornhill came to me with looks of real pleaſure, to inform me of a piece of ſervice he had done for his friend George. This was nothing leſs than his having procured him an enſign's commiſſion in one of the regiments that was going to the Weſt Indies, for which he had promiſed but one hundred pounds, his intereſt being ſufficient to get an abatement of the other two; 'As for this trifling piece of ſervice,' continued the young gentleman, 'I deſire no other reward but the 'pleaſure of having ſerved my friend; and as for the 'hundred pounds to be paid, if you are unable to 'raiſe it yourſelves, I will advance it, and you ſhall 'repay me at your leiſure.' This was a favour we wanted words to expreſs our ſenſe of. I readily, therefore, gave my bond for the money, and teſtified as much gratitude as if I never intended to pay.

George was to depart for town the next day to ſecure his commiſſion, in purſuance of his generous patron's directions, who judged it highly expedient to uſe diſpatch, leſt in the mean time another ſhould ſtep in with more advantageous propoſals. The next morning, therefore, our young ſoldier was early prepared for his departure, and ſeemed the only perſon among

among us that was not affected by it. Neither the fatigues and dangers he was going to encounter, nor the friends and mistress, for Miss Wilmot actually loved him, he was leaving behind, any way damped his spirits. After he had taken leave of the rest of the company, I gave him all that I had, my blessing. 'And now, my boy,' cried I, 'thou art going to 'fight for thy country, remember how thy brave 'grand-father fought for his sacred king, when loyalty 'among Britons was a virtue. Go, my boy, and 'imitate him in all but his misfortunes; if it was 'a misfortune to die with lord Falkland. Go, my 'boy, and if you fall, though distant, exposed and 'unwept by those that love you, the most precious 'tears are those with which Heaven bedews the un-'buried head of a soldier.'

The next morning I took leave of the good family, that had been kind enough to entertain me so long, not without several expressions of gratitude to Mr. Thornhill for his late bounty. I left them in the enjoyment of all that happiness which affluence and good-breeding procure, and returned towards home, despairing of ever finding my daughter more, but sending a sigh to Heaven to spare and forgive her. I was now come within about twenty miles of home, having hired a horse to carry me, as I was yet but weak, and comforted myself with the hopes of soon seeing all I held dearest upon earth. But the night coming on, I put up at a little public-house by the road side, and asked for the landlord's company over a pint of wine. We sat beside his kitchen-fire, which was the best room in the house, and chatted on politics and the news of the country. We happened among other topics, to talk of young Squire Thornhill, who the host assured me, was hated as much as his uncle, Sir William, who sometimes came down to the country, was loved. He went on to observe, that he made it his whole study to betray the daughters of such as received him into their houses, and after a fortnight or three weeks pos-

session,

ſeſſion, turned them out unrewarded and abandoned to the world. As we continued our diſcourſe in this manner, his wife, who had been out to get change, returned, and perceiving that her huſband was enjoying a pleaſure in which ſhe was not a ſharer, ſhe aſked him, in an angry tone, what he did there; to which he only replied in an ironical way, by drinking her health. 'Mr. Symmonds,' cried ſhe, 'you uſe me 'very ill, and I'll bear it no longer. Here three 'parts of the buſineſs is left for me to do, and the 'fourth left unfiniſhed, while you do nothing but 'ſoak with the gueſts all day long, whereas, if a 'ſpoonful of liquor were to cure me of a fever, I 'never touch a drop.' I now found what ſhe would be at, and immediately poured out a glaſs, which ſhe received with a curtſey, and drinking towards my good health, 'Sir,' reſumed ſhe, 'it is not ſo much for 'the value of the liquor I am angry, but one cannot 'help it when the houſe is going out of the windows. 'If the cuſtomers or gueſts are to be dunned, all the 'burden lies upon my back, he'd as lief eat that glaſs 'as budge after them himſelf. There, now above 'ſtairs, we have a young woman who has come to 'take up her lodgings here, and I don't believe ſhe 'has got any money, by her over civility. I am cer'tain ſhe is very ſlow of payment, and I wiſh ſhe 'were put in mind of it.'—'What ſignifies minding 'her,' cried the hoſt; 'if ſhe be ſlow, ſhe is ſure.'— 'I don't know that,' replied the wife; 'but I know 'that I am ſure ſhe has been here a fortnight, and we 'have not yet ſeen the croſs of her money.'—'I ſup'poſe, my dear,' cried he, 'we ſhall have it all in a 'lump.'—'In a lump,' cried the other, 'I hope we 'may get it any way; and that I am reſolved we 'will this very night, or out ſhe tramps, bag and 'baggage.'---'Conſider, my dear,' cried the huſband, 'ſhe is a gentlewoman, and deſerves more reſpect.'-- 'As for the matter of that,' returned the hoſteſs, 'gentle or ſimple, out ſhe ſhall pack with a ſuſſarara.

'Gentry may be good things where they take; but 'for my part I never ſaw much good of them at the 'ſign of the Harrow.' Thus ſaying, ſhe ran up a narrow flight of ſtairs that went from the kitchen to a room over head, and I ſoon perceived by the loudneſs of her voice, and the bitterneſs of her reproaches, that no money was to be had from her lodger. I could hear the remonſtrances very diſtinctly: 'Out, I 'ſay; pack out this moment! tramp, thou infamous 'ſtrumpet, or I'll give thee a mark thou won't be the 'better for theſe three months. What! you trum-'pery, to come and take up an honeſt houſe, without 'croſs or coin to bleſs yourſelf with; come along I 'ſay.'---'O dear Madam,' cried the ſtranger, 'pity 'me, pity a poor abandoned creature, for one night, 'and death will ſoon do the reſt.' I inſtantly knew the voice of my poor ruined child, Olivia. I flew to her reſcue, while the woman was dragging her along by the hair, and I caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms. 'Welcome, any way welcome, my deareſt 'loſt one, my treaſure, to your poor old father's bo-'ſom. Though the vicious forſake thee, there is yet 'one in the world that will never forſake thee; though 'thou haſt ten thouſand crimes to anſwer for, he will 'forget them all.'---'O my own dear,'---for minutes ſhe could ſay no more, 'my own deareſt good papa! 'Could angels be kinder! How do I deſerve ſo much? 'The villain, I hate him and myſelf to be a reproach 'to ſo much goodneſs. You can't forgive me. I 'know you cannot.'---'Yes, my child, from my 'heart I do forgive thee: Only repent, and we both 'ſhall be happy. We ſhall ſee many pleaſant days 'yet, my Olivia.' 'Ah; never, Sir, never. The 'reſt of my wretched life muſt be infamy abroad, and 'ſhame at home. But alas! papa, you look much 'paler than you uſed to do. Could ſuch a thing as I 'am give you ſo much uneaſineſs? Sure you have 'too much wiſdom to take the miſeries of my guilt 'upon yourſelf.'---'Our wiſdom, young woman,'

replied I. ‘ Ah why ſo cold a name, papa?’ cried ſhe. ‘ This is the firſt time you ever called me by ſo ‘ cold a name.’---‘ I aſk pardon, my darling,’ returned I; ‘ but I was going to obſerve, that wiſdom makes ‘ but a ſlow defence againſt trouble, though at laſt a ‘ ſure one.’

The landlady now returned to know if we did not chuſe a more genteel apartment; to which aſſenting, we were ſhewn to a room where we could converſe more freely. After we had talked ourſelves into ſome degree of tranquillity, I could not avoid deſiring ſome account of the gradations that led to her preſent wretched ſituation. ‘ That villain, Sir,’ ſaid ſhe, ‘ from ‘ the firſt day of our meeting, made me honourable, ‘ though private propoſals.’

‘ Villain indeed,’ cried I; ‘ and yet it in ſome mea- ‘ ſure ſurpriſes me, how a perſon of Mr. Burchell’s ‘ good ſenſe, and ſeeming honour, could be guilty of ‘ ſuch deliberate baſeneſs, and thus ſtep into a family ‘ to undo it.’

‘ My dear papa,’ returned my daughter, ‘ you la- ‘ bour under a ſtrange miſtake. Mr. Burchell never ‘ attempted to deceive me. Inſtead of that, he took ‘ every opportunity of privately admoniſhing me ‘ againſt the artifices of Mr. Thornhill, who, I now ‘ find, was even worſe than he repreſented him.’—‘ Mr. ‘ Thornhill!’ interrupted I, ‘ can it be?’—‘ Yes, Sir,’ returned ſhe, ‘ it was Mr. Thornhill who ſeduced ‘ me, who employed the two ladies, as he called them, ‘ but who in fact were abandoned women of the town, ‘ without breeding or pity to decoy us up to London. ‘ Their artifices, you may remember, would have ‘ certainly ſucceeded, but for Mr. Burchell’s letter, ‘ who directed thoſe reproaches at them, which we ‘ all applied to ourſelves. How he came to have ſo ‘ much influence as to defeat their intentions, ſtill re- ‘ mains a ſecret to me; but I am convinced he was ‘ ever our warmeſt, ſincereſt friend.’

‘ You amaze me, my dear,’ cried I; ‘ but now

‘ I find

'I find my firſt ſuſpicions of Mr. Thornhill's baſeneſs 'were too well grounded: but he can triumph in ſe'curity; for he is rich, and we are poor. But tell 'me, my child; ſure it was no ſmall temptation that 'could thus obliterate all the impreſſions of ſuch an 'education, and ſo virtuous a diſpoſition as thine?'

'Indeed, Sir,' replied ſhe, 'he owes all his tri'umph to the deſire I had of making him, and not 'myſelf, happy. I knew that the ceremony of our 'marriage, which was privately performed by a po'piſh prieſt, was no way binding, and that I had no'thing to truſt to but his honour.'----'What interrupted I, 'and were you indeed married by a prieſt 'in orders?'----'Indeed, Sir, we were,' replied ſhe, 'though we were both ſworn to conceal his name.'—'Why then, my child, come to my arms again; and 'now you are a thouſand times more welcome than 'before; for you are now his wife to all intents and 'purpoſes; nor can all the laws of man, though 'written upon tables of adamant, leſſen the force of 'that ſacred connection.'

'Alas, papa,' replied ſhe, 'you are but little ac'quainted with his villanies: he has been married 'already, by the ſame prieſt, to ſix or eight wives 'more, whom, like me, he has deceived and aban'doned.'

'Has he ſo!' cried I, 'then we muſt hang the 'prieſt, and you ſhall inform againſt him to-mor'row.----'But, Sir,' returned ſhe, 'will that be 'right, when I am ſworn to ſecreſy!'---'My dear,' I replied, 'if you have made ſuch a promiſe, I can'not, nor will I tempt you to break it. Even 'though it may benefit the public, you muſt not 'inform againſt him. In all human inſtitutions, 'a ſmaller evil is allowed to procure a greater good; 'as in politics, a province may be given away to 'ſecure a kingdom; in medicine, a limb may be 'lopt off, to preſerve the body. But in religion, 'the law is written, and inflexibly, *never* to do 'evil.

'evil. And this law, my child is right; for other-'wise, if we commit a smaller evil to procure a 'greater good, certain guilt would be thus incur-'red, in expectation of contingent advantage. And 'though the advantage should certainly follow, yet 'yet the interval between commission and advantage, 'which is allowed to be guilty, may be that in which 'we are called away to answer for the things we have 'done, and the volume of human actions is closed for 'ever. But I interrupt you, my dear; go on.'

'The very next morning,' continued she, 'I found 'what little expectation I was to have from his since-'rity. That very morning he introduced me to two 'unhappy women more, whom, like me, he had 'deceived, but who lived in contented prostitution. 'I loved him too tenderly to bear such rivals in his 'affections, and strove to forget my infamy in a 'tumult of pleasure. With this view, I danced, 'dressed, and talked; but still was unhappy. The 'gentlemen who visited there told me every moment 'of the power of my charms, and this only contri-'buted to increase my melancholy, as I had thrown 'all their power quite away. Thus each day I grew 'more pensive, and he more insolent; till at last the 'monster had the assurance to offer me to a young 'baronet of his acquaintance. Need I describe, Sir, 'how his ingratitude stung me. My answer to this 'proposal was almost madness. I desired to part. 'As I was going, he offered me a purse; but I flung 'it at him with indignation, and burst from him in a 'rage that for a while kept me insensible of the mi-'series of my situation. But I soon looked round 'me, and saw myself a vile, abject, guilty thing, 'without one friend in the world to apply to. Just 'in that interval, a stage-coach happening to pass by; 'I took a place, it being my only aim to be driven at 'a distance from a wretch I despised and detested. I 'was set down here; where, since my arrival, my 'own anxiety, and this woman's unkindness, have

'been my only companions. The hours of pleaſure 'that I have paſſed with my mama and ſiſter now 'grow painful to me, their ſorrows are much; but 'mine are greater than theirs; for mine are mixed 'with guilt and infamy.'

'Have patience, my child,' cried I, 'and I hope 'things will yet be better. Take ſome repoſe to-'night, and to-morrow I'll carry you home to your 'mother and the reſt of the family, from whom you 'will receive a kind reception. Poor woman! this 'has gone to her heart: but ſhe loves you ſtill, Oli-'via, and will forget it.'

CHAP. III.

Offences are eaſily pardoned where there is love at bottom.

THE next morning I took my daughter behind me, and ſet out on my return home. As we travelled along, I ſtrove by every perſuaſion, to calm her ſorrows and fears, and to arm her with reſolution to bear the preſence of her offended mother. I took every opportunity, from the proſpect of a fine country, through which we paſſed, to obſerve how much kinder Heaven was to us, than we to each other; and that the misfortunes of nature's making were but few. I aſſured her, that ſhe ſhould never perceive any change in my affections, and that during my life, which yet might be long, ſhe might depend upon a guardian and an inſtructor. I armed her againſt the cenſures of the world, ſhewed her that books were ſweet unreproaching companions to the miſerable, and that if they could not bring us to enjoy life, they would at leaſt teach us to endure it.

The hired horſe that we rode was to be put up that night at an inn by the way, within about five miles from my houſe; and as I was willing to prepare my family for my daughter's reception, I determined to leave her that night at the inn, and to return for her, accompanied

accompanied by my daughter Sophia, early the next morning. It was night before we reached our appointed ſtage: however, after ſeeing her provided with a decent apartment, and having ordered our hoſteſs to prepare proper refreſhments, I kiſſed her, and proceeded towards home. And now my heart caught new ſenſations of pleaſure, the nearer I approached that peaceful manſion. As a bird that had been frighted from its neſt, my affections out-went my haſte, and hovered round my little fire-ſide with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to ſay, and anticipated the welcome I was to receive. I already felt my wife's tender embrace, and ſmiled at the joy of my little ones. As I walked but ſlowly, the night wained apace. The labourers of the day were all retired to reſt; the lights were out in every cottage; no ſounds were heard but of the ſhrilling cock, and the deep mouthed watch dog, at hollow diſtance. I approached my abode of pleaſure, and before I was within a furlong of the place, our honeſt maſtiff came running to welcome me.

It was now near midnight that I came to knock at my door: all was ſtill and ſilent; my heart dilated with unutterable happineſs; when to my amazement, I ſaw the houſe burſting out in a blaze of fire, and every aperture red with conflagration! I gave a loud convulſive out-cry, and fell upon the pavement inſenſible. This alarmed my ſon, who had till this been aſleep, and he perceiving the flames, inſtantly waked my wife and daughter, and all running out, naked, and wild with apprehenſion, recalled me to life with their anguiſh. But it was only to objects of new terror; for the flames had by this time caught the roof of our dwelling, part after part continuing to fall in, while the family ſtood with ſilent agony, looking on, as if they enjoyed the blaze. I gazed upon them and upon it by turns, and then looked round me for my two little ones; but they were not to be ſeen. 'O miſery! 'Where,' cried I, 'where are my little ones?'—'They

'are burnt to death in the flames,' ſaid my wife calmly, 'and I will die with them.'-----That moment I heard the cry of the babes within, who were juſt awaked by the fire, and nothing could have ſtopped me. 'Where, 'where are my children?' cried I, ruſhing through the flames, and burſting the door of the chamber in which they were confined, 'Where are my little ones?---'Here, dear papa; here we are?' cried they together, while the flames were juſt catching the bed where they lay. I caught them both in my arms, and ſnatched them through the fire as faſt as poſſible, while juſt as I was got out the roof ſunk in. 'Now,' cried I, holding up my children, 'now let the flames burn 'on, and all my poſſeſſions periſh. Here they are, 'I have ſaved my treaſure. Here, my deareſt, here 'are our treaſures, and we ſhall yet be happy.' We kiſſed our little darlings a thouſand times, they claſped us round the neck, and ſeem to ſhare our tranſports, while their mother laughed and wept by turns.

I now ſtood a calm ſpectator of the flames, and after ſome time began to perceive that my arm to the ſhoulder was ſcorched in a terrible manner. It was therefore out of my power to give my ſon any aſſiſtance, either in attempting to ſave our goods, or preventing the flames ſpreading to our corn. By this time the neighbours were alarmed, and came running to our aſſiſtance; but all they could do was to ſtand, like us, ſpectators of the calamity. My goods, among which were the notes I had reſerved for my daughters fortunes, were entirely conſumed, except a box with ſome papers that ſtood in the kitchen, and two or three things more of little conſequence, which my ſon brought away in the beginning. The neighbours contributed, however, what they could to lighten our diſtreſs. They brought us clothes, and furniſhed one of our out-houſes with kitchen utenſils; ſo that by day-light we had another, though a wretched dwelling, to retire to. My honeſt next neighbour, and

and his children were not the leaſt aſſiduous in providing us with every thing neceſſary, and offering whatever conſolation untutored benevolence could ſuggeſt.

When the fears of my family had ſubſided, curioſity to know the cauſe of my long ſtay began to take place; having therefore informed them of every particular, I proceeded to prepare them for the reception of our loſt one, and though we had nothing but wretchedneſs now to impart, I was willing to procure her a welcome to what we had. This taſk would have been more difficult but for our recent calamity, which had humbled my wife's pride, and blunted it by more poignant afflictions. Being unable to go for my poor child myſelf, as my arm grew very painful, I ſent my ſon and daughter, who ſoon returned, ſupporting the wretched delinquent, who had not the courage to look up at her mother; whom no inſtructions of mine could perſuade to a perfect reconciliation; for women have much ſtronger ſenſe of female error than men. 'Ah madam,' cried her mother, 'this is but a poor place you are come to after ſo 'much finery. My daughter Sophy and I can afford 'but little entertainment to perſons who have kept 'company only with people of diſtinction. Yes, Miſs 'Livy, your poor father and I have ſuffered very much 'of late; but I hope heaven will forgive you.' During this reception, the unhappy victim ſtood pale and trembling, unable to weep or to reply; but I could not continue a ſilent ſpectator of her diſtreſs; wherefore aſſuming a degree of ſeverity in my voice and manner, which was ever followed with inſtant ſubmiſſion, 'I entreat woman that my words may be now 'marked once for all: I have here brought you back 'a poor deluded wanderer; her return to duty demands 'the revival of our tenderneſs. The real hardſhips 'of life are now coming faſt upon us, let us not 'therefore increaſe them by diſſention among each 'other. If we live harmoniouſly together, we may

'yet be contented, as there are enough of us to ſhut
'out the cenſuring world, and keep each other in
'countenance. The kindneſs of heaven is promiſed
'to the penitent, and let ours be directed by the ex-
'ample. Heaven, we are aſſured, is much more
'pleaſed to view a repentant ſinner, than ninety-nine
'perſons who have ſupported a courſe of undeviating
'rectitude. And this is right; for that ſingle effort
'by which we ſtop ſhort in the down-hill path to per-
'dition, is itſelf a greater exertion of virtue, than an
'hundred acts of juſtice.

CHAP. IV.

None but the guilty can be long and compleatly miſerable.

SOME aſſiduity was now required to make our preſent abode as convenient as poſſible, and we were ſoon again qualified to enjoy our former ſerenity. Being diſabled myſelf from aſſiſting my ſon in our uſual occupations, I read to my family from the few books that were ſaved, and particularly from ſuch as, by amuſing the imagination, contributed to eaſe the heart. Our good neighbours too came every day with the kindeſt condolence, and fixed a time in which they were all to aſſiſt at repairing my former dwelling. Honeſt farmer Williams was not laſt among theſe viſitors; but heartily offered his friendſhip. He would even have renewed his adreſſes to my daughter; but ſhe rejected them in ſuch a manner as totally repreſt his future ſolicitations. Her grief ſeemed formed for continuing, and ſhe was the only perſon of our little ſociety that a week did not reſtore to chearfulneſs. She now loſt that unbluſhing innocence which once taught her to reſpect herſelf, and to ſeek pleaſure by pleaſing. Anxiety had now taken ſtrong poſſeſſion of her mind, her beauty began to be impaired with her conſtitution, and neglect ſtill more continued to diminiſh it. Every tender epithet beſtowed on her ſiſter brought a pang to her heart and a tear to her eye; and as one vice, though

cured, ever plants others where it has been, so her former guilt, though driven out by repentance, left jealousy and envy behind. I strove a thousand ways to lessen her care, and even forgot my own pain in a concern for her's, collecting such amusing passages of history, as a strong memory and some reading could suggest. 'Our happiness my dear,' I would say, 'is 'in the power of One who can bring it about a 'thousand unforeseen ways, that mock our foresight. 'If example be necessary to prove this, I'll give you 'a story, my child, told us by a grave, though some-'times a romancing historian.

'Matilda was married very young to a Neapolitan 'nobleman of the first quality, and found herself a 'widow and a mother at the age of fifteen. As she 'stood one day caressing her infant son in the open 'window of an apartment, which hung over the river 'Volturna, the child, with a sudden spring, leaped 'from her arms into the flood below, and disappeared 'in a moment. The mother, struck with instant sur-'prize, and making an effort to save him, plunged in 'after; but far from being able to assist the infant, she 'herself with great difficulty escaped to the opposite 'shore, just when some French soldiers were plunder-'ing the country on that side, who immediately made 'her their prisoner.

'As the war was then carried on between the 'French and the Italians with the utmost inhumanity, 'they were going at once to perpetrate those two ex-'tremes suggested by appetite and cruelty. This 'base resolution, however, was opposed by a young 'officer, who, though his retreat required the utmost 'expedition, placed her behind him, and brought her 'in safety to his native city. Her beauty at first 'caught his eye, her merit soon after his heart. 'They were married; he rose to the highest posts; 'they lived long together, and were happy. But the 'felicity of a soldier can never be called permanent; 'after an interval of several years, the troops which he

'he commanded having met with a repulſe, he was 'obliged to take ſhelter in the city where he had lived 'with his wife. Here they ſuffered a ſiege, and the 'city at length was taken. Few hiſtories can pro- 'duce more various inſtances of cruelty, than thoſe 'which the French and Italians at that time exerciſed 'upon each other. It was reſolved by the victors, 'upon this occaſion, to put all the French priſoners 'to death; but particularly the huſband of the unfortu- 'nate Matilda, as he was principally inſtrumental in 'protracting the ſiege. Their determinations were, 'in general, executed almoſt as ſoon as reſolved upon. 'The captive ſoldier was led forth, and the execu- 'tioner with his ſword, ſtood ready, while the ſpecta- 'tors in gloomy ſilence awaited the fatal blow, which 'was only ſuſpended till the general, who preſided as 'judge, ſhould give the ſignal. It was in this inter- 'val of anguiſh and expectation, that Matilda came 'to take the laſt farewel of her huſband and deliverer, 'deploring her wretched ſituation, and the cruelty of 'fate, that had ſaved her from periſhing by a prema- 'ture death in the river Volturna, to be the ſpectator 'of ſtill greater calamities. The general, who was 'a young man, was ſtruck with ſurprize at her 'beauty, and pity at her diſtreſs; but with ſtill 'ſtronger emotions when he heard her mention her 'former dangers. He was her ſon, the infant for whom 'ſhe had encountered ſo much danger; acknowledged 'her at once as his mother, and fell at her feet. The 'reſt may be eaſily ſuppoſed: the captive was ſet free, 'and all the happineſs that love, friendſhip, and duty 'could confer on each, were united.'

In this manner I would attempt to amuſe my daugh- ter; but ſhe liſtened with divided attention; for her own misfortunes engroſſed all the pity ſhe once had for thoſe of another, and nothing gave her eaſe. In com- pany ſhe dreaded contempt; and in ſolitude ſhe only found anxiety. Such was the colour of her wretched- neſs, when we received certain information that Mr. Thornhill

Thornhill was going to be married to Miſs Wilmot, for whom I always ſuſpected he had a real paſſion, though he took every opportunity before me to expreſs his contempt both of her perſon and fortune. This news ſerved only to increaſe poor Olivia's affliction; for ſuch a flagrant breach of fidelity was more than her courage could ſupport. I was reſolved, however, to get more certain information, and to defeat, if poſſible, the completion of his deſigns, by ſending my ſon to old Wilmot's, with inſtructions to know the truth of the report, and to deliver Miſs Wilmot a letter, intimating Mr. Thornhill's conduct in my family. My ſon went, in purſuance of my directions, and in three days returned, aſſuring us of the truth of the account; but that he found it impoſſible to deliver the letter, which he was therefore obliged to leave, as Mr. Thornhill and Miſs Wilmot were viſiting round the country. They were to be married, he ſaid, in a few days, having appeared together at church the Sunday before he was there, in great ſplendour, the bride attended by ſix young ladies, and he by as many gentlemen. Their approaching nuptials filled the whole country with rejoicing, and they uſually rode out together in the grandeſt equipage that had been in the country for many years. All the friends of both families, he ſaid were there, particularly the ſquire's uncle, Sir William, who bore ſo good a character. He added, that nothing but mirth and feaſting were going forward; that all the country praiſed the young bride's beauty, and the bridegroom's fine perſon, and that they were immenſely fond of each other; concluding, that he could not help thinking Mr. Thornhilll one of the moſt happy men in the world.

'Why, let him if he can,' returned I: 'but my 'ſon, obſerve this bed of ſtraw, and unſheltering 'roof; thoſe mouldering walls, and humid floor; my 'wretched body thus diſabled by fire, and my chil- 'dren weeping round me for bread: you have come 'home, my child, to all this; yet here, even here,

'you

' you ſee a man that would not for a thouſand worlds
' exchange ſituations. O, my children, if you could
' but learn to commune with your own hearts, and
' know what noble company you can make them, you
' would little regard the elegance and ſplendour of the
' worthleſs. Almoſt all men have been taught to call
' life a paſſage, and themſelves travellers. The ſimi-
' litude ſtill may be improved, when we obſerve that
' the good are joyful and ſerene, like travellers that
' are going towards home; the wicked but by intervals
' happy, like travellers that are going into exile.'

My compaſſion for my poor daughter, overpowered by this new diſaſter, interrupted what I had farther to obſerve. I bade her mother ſupport her, and after a ſhort time ſhe recovered. She appeared from that time more calm, and I imagined had gained a new degree of reſolution: but appearances deceived me; for her tranquility was the languor of overwrought reſentment. A ſupply of proviſions, charitably ſent us by my kind pariſhioners, ſeemed to diffuſe new chearfulneſs among the reſt of my family, nor was I diſpleaſed at ſeeing them once more ſprightly and at eaſe. It would have been unjuſt to damp their ſatisfactions, merely to condole with reſolute melancholy, or to burden them with a ſadneſs they did not feel. Thus, once more, the tale went round, and the ſong was demanded, and chearfulneſs condeſcended to hover round our little habitation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Fresh Calamities.

THE next morning the fun arofe with peculiar warmth for the feafon; fo that we agreed to breakfaft together on the honey-fuckle bank: where, while we fate, my youngeft daughter, at my requeft, joined her voice to the concert on the trees about us. It was in this place my poor Olivia firft met her feducer, and every object ferved to recal her fadnefs. But that melancholy, which is excited by objects of pleafure, or infpired by founds of harmony, foothes the heart inftead of corroding it. Her mother, too, upon this occafion, felt a pleafing diftrefs and wept, and loved her daughter as before. 'Do, my pretty 'Olivia,' cried fhe, 'let us have that little melancholy 'air your papa was fo fond of; your fifter Sophy has 'already obliged us. Do, child, it will pleafe your 'old father.' She complied in a manner fo exquifitely pathetic, as moved me.

WHEN lovely woman ftoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can footh her melancholy,
What art can wafh her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her fhame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bofom---is to die.

As fhe was concluding the laft ftanza, to which an interruption in her voice from forrow gave peculiar foftnefs, the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at a diftance alarmed us all, but particularly increafed the uneafinefs of my eldeft daughter, who, defirous of fhunning her betrayer, returned to the houfe with her fifter. In a few minutes he was alighted from his chariot, and making up to the place where I was ftill fitting, enquired after my health with his ufual air of familiarity.

familiarity. 'Sir,' replied I, 'your present assurance 'only serves to aggravate the baseness of your character; and there was a time when I would have 'chastised your insolence, for presuming thus to appear before me. But now you are safe; for age 'has cooled my passions, and my calling restrains 'them.'

'I vow, my dear Sir,' returned he, 'I am amazed 'at all this; nor can I understand what it means! I 'hope you don't think your daughter's late excursion 'with me had any thing criminal in it.'

'Go,' cried I, 'thou art a wretch, a poor pitiful 'wretch, and every way a liar; but your meanness 'secures you from my anger! Yet, Sir, I am descended from a family that would not have borne 'this! And so, thou vile thing, to gratify a momentary passion, thou hast made one poor creature 'wretched for life, and polluted a family that had nothing but honour for their portion.'

'If she or you,' returned he, 'are resolved to be 'miserable, I cannot help it. But you may still be 'happy; and whatever opinion you may have formed 'of me, you shall ever find me ready to contribute to 'it. We can marry her to another in a short time; 'and what is more, she may keep her lover beside; for 'I protest I shall ever continue to have a true regard 'for her.'

I found all my passions alarmed at this new degrading proposal; for though the mind may often be calm under great injuries, little villainy can at any time get within the soul, and sting it into rage. 'Avoid 'my sight, thou reptile,' cried I, 'nor continue to 'insult me with thy presence. Were my brave son 'at home, he would not suffer this; but I am old and 'disabled, and every way undone.'

'I find,' cried he, 'you are bent upon obliging me 'to talk in a harsher manner than I intended. But 'as I have shewn you what may be hoped from my 'friendship, it may not be improper to represent what

'may

'may be the consequences of my resentment. My attorney, to whom your late bond has been transferred, threatens hard, nor do I know how to prevent the course of justice, except by paying the money myself, which, as I have been at some expences lately, previous to my intended marriage, is not so easy to be done. And then my steward talks of driving for the rent: it is certain he knows his duty; for I never trouble myself with affairs of that nature. Yet still I could wish to serve you, and even to have you and your daughter present at my marriage, which is shortly to be solemnized with Miss Wilmot; it is even the request of my charming Arabella herself, whom I hope you will not refuse.'

'Mr. Thornhill,' replied I, 'hear me once for all: as to your marriage with any but my daughter, that I never will consent to; and though your friendship could raise me to a throne, or your resentment sink me to the grave, yet would I despise both. Thou hast once woefully, irreparably deceived me. I reposed my heart upon thine honour, and have found its baseness. Never more therefore expect friendship from me. Go, and possess what fortune has given thee, beauty, riches, health, and pleasure. Go, and leave me to want, infamy, disease, and sorrow. Yet humbled as I am, shall my heart still vindicate its dignity, and though thou hast my forgiveness, thou shalt ever have my contempt.'

'If so,' returned he, 'depend upon it you shall feel the effects of this insolence, and we shall shortly see which is the fittest object of scorn, you or me.' Upon which he departed abruptly.'

My wife and son, who were present at this interview, seemed terrified with the apprehension. My daughters also, finding that he was gone, came out to be informed of the result of our conference; which, when known, alarmed them not less than the rest. But, as to myself, I disregarded the utmost stretch of his malevolence: he had already struck the blow, and

I now ſtood prepared to repel every new effort; like one of thoſe inſtruments uſed in the art of war, which, however thrown, ſtill preſents a point to receive the enemy.

We ſoon, however, found that he had not threatened in vain; for the very next morning his ſteward came to demand my annual rent, which, by the train of accidents already related, I was unable to pay. The conſequence of my incapacity was his driving my cattle that evening, and their being appraiſed and ſold the next day for leſs than half their value. My wife and children now therefore intreated me to comply upon any terms, rather than incur certain deſtruction. They even begged of me to admit his viſits once more, and uſed all their little eloquence to paint the calamities I was going to endure: the terrors of a priſon in ſo rigorous a ſeaſon as the preſent, with the danger that threatened my health from the late accident that happened by the fire. But I continued inflexible.

'Why, my treaſures,' cried I, 'why will you 'thus attempt to perſuade me to the thing that is not 'right! My duty has taught me to forgive him, 'but my conſcience will not permit me to approve. 'Would you have me applaud to the world what my 'heart muſt internally condemn? Would you have me 'tamely ſit down and flatter our infamous betrayer; 'and to avoid a priſon, continually ſuffer the more 'galling bonds of mental confinement? No, never. 'If we are to be taken from this abode, only let us 'hold to the right, and wherever we are thrown, we 'can ſtill retire to a charming apartment, when we 'can look round our own hearts with intrepidity and 'with pleaſure!'

In this manner we ſpent that evening. Early the next morning, as the ſnow had fallen in great abundance in the night, my ſon was employed in clearing it away, and opening a paſſage before the door. He had not been thus engaged long, when he came running

ning in, with looks all pale, to tell us that two ſtrangers whom he knew to be officers of juſtice, were making towards the houſe.

Juſt as he ſpoke they came in, and approaching the bed where I lay, after previouſly informing me of their employment and buſineſs, made me their priſoner, bidding me prepare to go with them to the county gaol, which was eleven miles off.

'My friends,' ſaid I, 'this is ſevere weather in 'which you have come to take me to a priſon; and 'it is particularly unfortunate at this time, as one of 'my arms has lately been burnt in a terrible manner, 'and it has thrown me into a ſlight fever, and I want 'clothes to cover me, and I am now too weak and 'old to walk far in ſuch deep ſnow: but if it muſt 'be ſo---'

I then turned to my wife and children, and directed them to get together what few things were left us, and to prepare immediately for leaving this place. I entreated them to be expeditious: and deſired my ſon to aſſiſt his eldeſt ſiſter; who, from a conſciouſneſs that ſhe was the cauſe of all our calamities, was fallen, and had loſt anguiſh in inſenſibility. I encouraged my wife, who, pale and trembling, claſped our affrighted little ones in her arms, that clung to her boſom in ſilence, dreading to look round at the ſtrangers. In the mean time my youngeſt daughter prepared for our departure, and as ſhe received ſeveral hints to uſe diſpatch, in about an hour we were ready to depart.

CHAP. VI.

No ſituation, however wretched it ſeems, but has ſome ſort of comfort attending it.

WE ſet forward from this peaceful neighbourhood, and walked on ſlowly. My eldeſt daughter being enfeebled by a ſlow fever, which had begun for ſome days to undermine her conſtitution, one of the officers, who had an horſe, kindly took her behind him; for even theſe men cannot entirely diveſt themſelves of humanity. My ſon led one of the little ones by the hand, and my wife the other; while I leaned upon my youngeſt girl, whoſe tears fell not for her own, but my diſtreſſes.

We were now got from my late dwelling about two miles, when we ſaw a crowd running and ſhouting behind us, conſiſting of about fifty of my pooreſt pariſhioners. Theſe, with dreadful imprecations, ſoon ſeized upon the two officers of juſtice, and ſwearing they would never ſee their miniſter go to a gaol while they had a drop of blood to ſhed in his defence, were going to uſe them with great ſeverity. The conſequence might have been fatal, had I not immediately interpoſed, and with ſome difficulty reſcued the officers from the hands of the enraged multitude. My children, who looked upon my delivery now as certain, appeared tranſported with joy, and were incapable of containing their raptures. But they were ſoon undeceived, upon hearing me addreſs the poor deluded people, who came as they imagined to do me ſervice.

'What! my friends,' cried I, 'and is this the 'way you love me! Is this the manner you obey the 'inſtructions I have given you from the pulpit! Thus 'to fly in the face of juſtice, and bring down ruin 'on yourſelves and me! Which is your ring leader? 'Shew me the man that has thus ſeduced you. As 'ſure as he lives, he ſhall feel my reſentment. Alas! 'my poor deluded flock, return back to the duty you

'owe

'owe to God, to your country and to me. I ſhall 'yet perhaps one day ſee you in greater felicity here, 'and contribute to make your lives more happy. 'But let it at leaſt be my comfort when I pen my 'fold for immortality, that not one here ſhall be 'wanting.'

They now ſeemed all repentance, and melting into tears, came one after the other to bid me farewel. I ſhook each tenderly by the hand, and leaving them my bleſſing, proceeded forward without meeting any further interruption. Some hours before night we reached the town, or rather village; for it conſiſted but of a few mean houſes, having loſt all its former opulence, and retaining no marks of its antient ſuperiority but the gaol.

Upon entering we put up at an inn, where we had ſuch refreſhments as could moſt readily be procured, and I ſupped with my family with my uſual chearfulneſs. After ſeeing them properly accommodated for that night, I next attended the ſheriff's officers to the priſon, which had formerly been built for the purpoſes of war, and conſiſted of one large apartment, ſtrongly grated, and paved with ſtone, common to both felons and debtors at certain hours in the four and twenty. Beſides this, every priſoner had a ſeparate cell, where he was locked in for the night.

I expected upon my entrance to find nothing but lamentations, and various ſounds of miſery; but it was very different. The priſoners ſeemed all employed in one common deſign, that of forgetting thought in merriment or clamour. I was appriſed of the uſual perquiſite required upon theſe occaſions, and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money I had was very near being all exhauſted. This was immediately ſent away for liquor, and the whole priſon was ſoon filled with riot, laughter, and profaneneſs.

'How,' cried I to myſelf, 'ſhall men ſo very 'wicked be chearful, and ſhall I be melancholy! I

'feel only the ſame confinement with them, and I 'think I have more reaſon to be happy.'

With ſuch reflections I laboured to become chearful: but chearfulneſs was never yet produced by effort, which is itſelf painful. As I was ſitting therefore in a corner of the gaol, in a penſive poſture, one of my fellow priſoners came up, and ſitting by me, entered into converſation. It was my conſtant rule in life never to avoid the converſation of any man who ſeemed to deſire it: for if good I might profit by his inſtruction; if bad, he might be aſſiſted by mine. I found this to be a knowing man, of ſtrong unlettered ſenſe: but a thorough knowledge of the world, as it is called; or, more properly ſpeaking, of human nature on the wrong ſide. He aſked me if I had taken care to provide myſelf with a bed, which was a circumſtance I had never once attended to.

'That's unfortunate,' cried he, 'as you are allowed nothing but ſtraw, and your apartment is 'very large and cold. However, you ſeem to be 'ſomething of a gentleman, and as I have been one 'myſelf in my time, part of my bed-clothes are 'heartily at your ſervice.'

I thanked him, profeſſing my ſurpriſe at finding ſuch humanity in a gaol, in misfortunes; adding, to let him ſee that I was a ſcholar, that the ſage ancient ſeemed to underſtand the value of company in affliction, when he ſaid, *ton koſmon aire, ei dos ton etairon*, 'and in fact,' continued I, 'what is the world, if it 'affords only ſolitude?'

'You talk of the world, Sir,' returned my fellow priſoner; 'the world is in its dotage, and yet 'the coſmogony or creation of the world, has puzzled 'the philoſophers of every age. What a medley of 'opinions have they not broached upon the creation 'of the world. Sanconiathon, Manetho, Beroſus, 'and Ocellus Lucanus, have all attempted it in vain. 'The latter has theſe words, *Anarchon ara kai ateleutaion*

taion to pan, which implies—' 'I ask pardon, Sir,' cried I, for interrupting so much learning; but I 'think I have heard all this before. Have I not 'had the pleasure of once seeing you at Welbridge 'Fair, and is not your name Ephraim Jenkinson?' At this demand he only sighed. 'I suppose you must 'recollect,' resumed I, 'one Doctor Primrose, from 'whom you bought a horse.'

He now at once recollected me; for the gloominess of the place and the approaching night had prevented his distinguishing my features before. 'Yes, Sir,' returned Mr. Jenkinson, 'I remember you perfectly 'well; I bought an horse, but forgot to pay for him. 'Your neighbour Flamborough is the only prosecutor 'I am any way afraid of at the next assizes; for he 'intends to swear positively against me as a coiner. I 'am heartily sorry, Sir, I ever deceived you, or in-'deed any man; for you see,' continued he, shewing his shackles, 'what my tricks have brought me to.'

'Well, Sir,' replied I, 'your kindness in offering 'me assistance, when you could expect no return, shall 'be repaid with my endeavours to soften or totally 'suppress Mr. Flamborough's evidence, and I will 'send my son to him for that purpose the first oppor-'tunity; nor do I in the least doubt but he will com-'ply with my request; and as to my own evidence, 'you need be under no uneasiness about that.'

'Well, Sir,' cried he, 'all the return I can make 'shall be your's. You shall have more than half my 'bed-clothes to night, and I'll take care to stand your 'friend in the prison, where I think I have some in-'fluence.'

I thanked him, and could not avoid being surprized at the present youthful change in his aspect; for at the time I had seen him before, he appeared at least sixty. 'Sir,' answered he, 'you are little acquainted 'with the world; I had at that time false hair, and 'have learned the art of counterfeiting every age from 'seventeen to seventy. Ah, Sir, had I but bestowed

'half

'half the pains in learning a trade, that I have in 'learning to be a ſcoundrel, I might have been a rich 'man at this day. But, rogue as I am, ſtill I may 'be your friend, and that, perhaps, when you leaſt 'expect it.'

We were now prevented from farther converſation by the arrival of the gaoler's ſervant, who came to call over the priſoners names and lock up for the night. A fellow alſo with a bundle of ſtraw for my bed attended, who led me along a dark narrow paſſage into a room paved like the common priſon, and in one corner of this I ſpread my bed, and the clothes given me by my fellow priſoner; which done, my conductor, who was civil enough, bade me a good night. After my uſual meditations, and having praiſed my Heavenly Corrector, I laid myſelf down, and ſlept with the utmoſt tranquility till morning.

CHAP. VII.

A reformation in the gaol; to make laws compleat they ſhould reward as well as puniſh.

THE next morning early I was awakened by my family, whom I found in tears at my bed-ſide. The gloomy ſtrength of every thing about us, it ſeems, had daunted them. I gently rebuked their ſorrow, aſſuring them I had never ſlept with greater tranquility, and next enquired after my eldeſt daughter, who was not among them. They informed me that yeſterday's uneaſineſs and fatigue had encreaſed her fever, and it was judged proper to leave her behind. My next care was to ſend my ſon to procure a room or two to lodge my family in, as near the priſon as conveniently could be found. He obeyed, but could only find one apartment, which was hired at a ſmall expence, for his mother and ſiſters, the gaoler with humanity conſenting to let him and his two little brothers lie in the priſon with me. A bed was therefore prepared for them in a corner of the room, which I

thought

thought anſwered very conveniently. I was willing, however, previouſly to know whether my little children choſe to lie in a place which ſeemed to fright them upon entrance.

'Well,' cried I, 'my good boys, how do you like 'your bed? I hope you are not afraid to lie in this 'room, dark as it appears.'

'No, papa,' ſays Dick, 'I am not afraid to lie any 'where, where you are.'

'And I,' ſays Bill, who was yet but four years old, 'love every place beſt that my papa is in.'

'After this, I allotted to each of the family what they were to do. My daughter was particularly directed to watch her declining ſiſter's health; my wife was to attend me; my little boys were to read to me: 'And as for you, my ſon,' continued I, 'it is by the 'labour of your hands we muſt all hope to be ſupported. Your wages, as a day labourer, will be full 'ſufficient, with proper frugality, to maintain us all, 'and comfortably too. Thou art now ſixteen years 'old, and haſt ſtrength, and it is given thee my ſon 'for very uſeful purpoſes: for it muſt ſave from famine your helpleſs parents and family. Prepare then 'this evening to look out for work againſt to-morrow, 'and bring home every night what money you earn 'for our ſupport.'

Having thus inſtructed him, and ſettled the reſt, I walked down to the common priſon where I could enjoy more air and room. But I was not long there when the execrations, lewdneſs and brutality, that invaded me on every ſide, drove me back to my apartment again. Here I ſat for ſome time pondering upon the ſtrange infatuation of wretches, who, finding all mankind in open arms againſt them, were labouring to make themſelves a future and tremendous enemy.

Their inſenſibility excited my higheſt compaſſion, and blotted my own uneaſineſs from my mind. It even appeared a duty incumbent upon me to attempt

to

to reclaim them. I reſolved therefore once more to return, and in ſpite of their contempt to give them my advice, and conquer them by perſeverance. Going therefore among them again, I informed Mr. Jenkinſon of my deſign; at which he laughed heartily, but communicated it to the reſt. The propoſal was received with the greateſt good humour, as it promiſed to afford a new fund of entertainment to perſons who had now other reſource for mirth, but what could be derived from ridicule or debauchery.

I therefore read them a portion of the ſervice with a loud unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occaſion. Lewd whiſpers, groans of contrition burleſqued, winking and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural ſolemnity to read on, ſenſible that what I did might amend ſome, but could itſelf receive no contamination from any.

After reading, I entered upon my exhortation, which was rather calculated at firſt to amuſe them than to reprove. I previouſly obſerved that no other motive but their welfare could induce me to this; that I was their fellow priſoner, and now got nothing by preaching. I was ſorry, I ſaid, to hear them ſo very profane; becauſe they got nothing by it, and might loſe a great deal; 'For, be aſſured, my friends,' cried I, '(for you are my friends however the world 'may diſclaim your friendſhip) though you ſwore 'twelve thouſand oaths in a day, it would not put one 'penny in your purſe. Then what ſignifies calling 'every moment upon the devil, and courting his 'friendſhip, ſince you find how ſcurvily he uſes you. 'He has given you nothing here, you find, but a 'mouthful of oaths and an empty belly; and by the 'beſt accounts I have of him, he will give you nothing that's good hereafter.

'If uſed ill in our dealings with one man, we 'naturally go elſewhere. Were it not worth your 'while then, juſt to try how you may like the uſage of

'another

'another Maſter, who gives you fair promiſes at 'leaſt to come to him? Surely, my friends, of all 'ſtupidity in the world, his muſt be the greateſt, 'who, after robbing an houſe, runs to the thief-takers 'for protection. And yet how are you more wiſe? 'You are all ſeeking comfort from one that has 'already betrayed you, applying to a more malicious 'being than any thief-taker of them all; for they 'only decoy and then hang you; but he decoys and 'hangs, and what is worſt of all, will not let you 'looſe after the hangman has done.'

When I had concluded, I received the compliments of my audience, ſome of whom came and ſhook me by the hand, ſwearing that I was a very honeſt fellow, and that they deſired my further acquaintance I therefore promiſed to repeat my lecture next day and actually conceived ſome hopes of making a reformation here: for it ever had been my opinion, that no man was paſt the hour of amendment, every heart lying open to the ſhafts of reproof, if the archer could but take a proper aim. When I had thus ſatisfied my mind, I went back to my apartment, where my wife prepared a frugal meal, while Mr. Jenkinſon begged leave to add his dinner to ours, and partake of the pleaſure, as he was kind enough to expreſs it, of my converſation. He had not yet ſeen my family, for as they came to my apartment by a door in the narrow paſſage already deſcribed, by this means they avoided the common priſon. Jenkinſon at the firſt interview therefore ſeemed not a little ſtruck with the beauty of my youngeſt daughter, which her penſive air contributed to heighten, and my little ones did not paſs unnoticed.

'Alas, doctor,' cried he, 'theſe children are too 'handſome and too good for ſuch a place as this!'

'Why, Mr. Jenkinſon,' replied I, 'thank Heaven, my children are pretty tolerable in morals, and if they be good, it matters little for the reſt.'

'I fancy, Sir,' returned my fellow priſoner, 'that 'it

'it muſt give you a great comfort to have this little 'family about you.'

'A comfort, Mr. Jenkinſon,' replied I, 'yes, 'it is indeed a comfort, and I would not be without 'them for all the world; for they can make a dungeon 'ſeem a palace. There is but one way in this life of 'wounding my happineſs, and that is by injuring 'them.'

'I am afraid then, Sir,' cried he, 'that I am in ſome 'meaſure culpable; for I think I ſee here,' (looking at my ſon Moſes) 'one that I have injured, and 'by whom I wiſh to be forgiven.'

My ſon immediately recollected his voice and features, though he had before ſeen him in diſguiſe, and taking him by the hand, with a ſmile forgave him. 'Yet,' continued he, 'I can't help wondering at what 'you could ſee in my face, to think me a proper 'mark for deception.'

'My dear Sir,' returned the other, 'it was not 'your face, but your white ſtockings and the black 'ribband in your hair, that allured me. But no diſ'paragement to your parts, I have deceived wiſer men 'than you in my time; and yet, with all my tricks, 'the blockheads have been too many for me at laſt.'

'I ſuppoſe,' cried my ſon, 'that the narrative of 'ſuch a life as your's muſt be extremely inſtructive 'and amuſing.'

'Not much of either,' returned Mr. Jenkinſon. 'Thoſe relations which deſcribe the tricks and vices 'only of mankind, by increaſing our ſuſpicion in 'life, retard our ſucceſs. The traveller that diſtruſts 'every perſon he meets, and turns back upon the ap'pearance of every man that looks like a robber, 'ſeldom arrives in time at his journey's end.

'Indeed I think, from my own experience, that 'the knowing one is the ſillieſt fellow under the 'ſun. I was thought cunning from my very child'hood; when but ſeven years old, the ladies would 'ſay that I was a perfect little man; at fourteen I

'knew the world, cocked my hat, and loved the 'ladies; at twenty, though I was perfectly honeſt, yet 'every one though me ſo cunning, that no one would 'truſt me. Thus I was at laſt obliged to turn ſharper 'in my own defence, and have lived ever ſince, my 'head throbbing with ſchemes to deceive, and my 'heart palpitating with fears of detection. I uſed often 'to laugh at your honeſt ſimple neighbour Flambo'rough, and one way or another generally cheated him 'once a year. Yet ſtill the honeſt man went forward 'without ſuſpicion and grew rich, while I ſtill con'tinued trickſy and cunning, and was poor, without 'the conſolation of being honeſt. However, continued he, 'let me know your caſe, and what has 'brought you here; perhaps, though I have not ſkill 'to avoid a gaol myſelf, I may extricate my friends.'

In compliance with this curioſity, I informed him of the whole train of accidents and follies that had plunged me into my preſent troubles, and my utter inability to get free.

After hearing my ſtory, and pauſing ſome minutes, he ſlapt his forehead, as if he had hit upon ſomething material, and took his leave, ſaying, he would try what could be done.

CHAP. VIII.

The same subject continued.

THE next morning I communicated to my wife and children the scheme I had planned of reforming the prisoners, which they received with universal disapprobation, alledging the impossibility and impropriety of it; adding that my endeavours would no way contribute to their amendment, but might probably disgrace my calling.

'Excuse me,' returned I; 'these people, however 'fallen, are still men, and that is a very good title 'to my affections. Good counsel rejected returns to 'enrich the giver's bosom; and though the instruc-'tion I communicate may not mend them, yet it will 'assuredly mend myself. If these wretches, my chil-'dren, were princes, there would be thousands ready 'to offer their ministry: but in my opinion, the 'heart that is buried in a dungeon, is as precious as 'that seated upon a throne. Yes, my treasures, if I 'can mend them I will; perhaps they will not all 'despise me. Perhaps I may catch up but even one 'from the gulph, and that will be great gain; for 'is there upon earth a gem so precious as the human 'soul?'

Thus saying, I left them, and descended to the common prison, where I found the prisoners very merry, expecting my arrival; and each prepared with some gaol trick to play upon the doctor. Thus as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry, as if by accident, and then asked my pardon. A second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book. A third would cry Amen in such an affected tone as gave the rest great delight. A fourth had slily picked my pocket of my spectacles. But there was one whose trick gave more universal pleasure than all the rest; for observing the manner in which I had disposed my

books

books on the table before me, he very dexterouſly diſplaced one of them, and put an obſcene jeſt book of his own in the place. However I took no notice of all that this miſchievous groupe of little beings could do; but went on, perfectly ſenſible that what was ridiculous in my attempt would excite mirth only the firſt or ſecond time, while what was ſerious would be permanent. My deſign ſucceeded, and in leſs than ſix days ſome were penitent, and all attentive.

It was now that I applauded my perſeverance and addreſs, at thus giving ſenſibility to wretches diveſted of every moral feeling, and now began to think of doing them temporal ſervices alſo, by rendering their ſituation ſomewhat more comfortable. Their time had hitherto been divided between famine and exceſs, tumultuous riot and bitter repining. Their only employment was quarrelling among each other, playing at cribbage, and cutting tobacco ſtoppers. From this laſt mode of idle induſtry I took the hint of ſetting ſuch as choſe to work at cutting pegs for tobacconiſts and ſhoe-makers, the proper wood being bought by a general ſubſcription, and when manufactured, ſold by my appointment: ſo that each earned ſomething every day; a trifle indeed, but ſufficient to maintain him.

I did not ſtop here, but inſtituted fines for the puniſhment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar induſtry. Thus, in leſs than a fortnight, I had formed them into ſomething ſocial and humane, and had the pleaſure of regarding myſelf as a legiſlator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendſhip and obedience.

And it were highly to be wiſhed, that legiſlative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than ſeverity. That it would ſeem convinced that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making puniſhments familiar, but formidable. Then, inſtead of our preſent priſons, which find or make men guilty,

which inclofe wretches for the commiffion of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thoufands; it were to be wifhed we had, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and folitude, where the accufed might be attended by fuch as could give them repentance if guilty, or new motives of virtue if innocent. And this, but not the increafing punifhments, is the way to mend the ftate: nor can I avoid the even queftioning the validity of that right which focial combinations have affumed, of capitally punifhing offences of a flight nature. In cafes of murder their right is obvious, as it is the duty of us all, from the law of felf-defence, to cut off that man who has fhewn a difregard for the life of another. Againft fuch, all nature rifes in arms; but it is not fo againft him who fteals my property. Natural law gives me no right to take away his life, as by that the horfe he fteals is as much his property as mine. If then, I have any right, it muft be from a compact made between us, that he who deprives the other of his horfe fhall die. But this is a falfe compact; becaufe no man has a right to barter his life, no more than take it away, as it is not his own. And befide, the compact is inadequate, and would be fet afide even in a court of modern equity, as there is a great penalty for a trifling convenience, fince it is far better that two men fhould live, than one man fhould ride. But a compact that is falfe between two men, is equally fo between an hundred and an hundred thoufand; for as ten millions of circles can never make a fquare, fo the united voice of myriads cannot lend the fmalleft foundation of falfhood. It is thus that reafon fpeaks, and untutored nature fays the fame thing. Savages, that are directed by natural law alone, are very tender of the lives of each other; they feldom fhed blood but to retaliate former cruelty.

Our Saxon anceftors, fierce as they were in war, had but few executions in times of peace; and in all commencing

commencing governments that have the print of nature ſtill ſtrong upon them, ſcarce any crime is held capital.

It is among the citizens of a refined community, that penal laws which are in the hands of the rich, are laid upon the poor. Government, while it grows older, ſeems to acquire the moroſeneſs of age; and as if our property were become dearer in proportion as it increaſed, as if the more enormous our wealth, the more extenſive our fears, all our poſſeſſions are paled up with new edicts every day, and hung round with gibbets to ſcare every invader.

I cannot tell, whether it is from the number of our penal laws, or the licentiouſneſs of our people, that this country ſhould ſhew more convicts in a year than half the dominions of Europe united. Perhaps it is owing to both; for they mutually produce each other. When by indiſcriminate penal laws a nation beholds the ſame puniſhment affixed to diſſimilar degrees of guilt, from perceiving no diſtinction in the penalty, the people are led to loſe all ſenſe of diſtinction in the crime, and this diſtinction is the bulwark of all morality: thus the multitude of laws produce new vices, and new vices call for freſh reſtraints.

It were to be wiſhed then that power, inſtead of contriving new laws to puniſh vice, inſtead of drawing hard the cords of ſociety till a convulſion come to burſt them, inſtead of cutting away wretches as uſeleſs, before we have tried their utility, inſtead of converting correction into vengeance, it were to be wiſhed that we tried the reſtrictive arts of government, and made law the protector but not the tyrant of the people. We ſhould then find, that creatures whoſe ſouls are held as droſs, only wanted the hand of a refiner; we ſhould then find that wretches, now ſhut up for long tortures, leſt luxury ſhould feel a momentary pang, might, if properly treated, ſerve

to ſinew the ſtate in times of danger; that as their faces are like ours, their hearts are ſo too; that few minds are ſo baſe, as that perſeverance cannot amend, that a man may ſee his laſt crime without dying for it; and that very little blood will ſerve to cement our ſecurity.

CHAP. IX.

Happineſs and wiſdom rather the reſult of prudence than of virtue in this life; temporal evils or felicities being regarded by Heaven as things merely in themſelves trifling, and unworthy its care in the diſtribution.

I HAD now been confined more than a fortnight, but had not ſince my arrival been viſited by my dear Olivia, and I greatly longed to ſee her. Having communicated my wiſhes to my wife, the next morning the poor girl entered my apartment, leaning on her ſiſter's arm. The change which I ſaw in her countenance ſtruck me. The numberleſs graces that once reſided there were now fled, and the hand of death ſeemed to have moulded every feature to alarm me. Her temples were ſunk, her forehead was tenſe, and a fatal paleneſs ſat upon her cheek.

'I am glad to ſee thee, my dear,' cried I! 'but 'why this dejection, Livy? I hope, my love, you 'have too great a regard for me, to permit diſap'pointment thus to undermine a life which I prize as 'my own. Be chearful, child, and we may yet ſee 'happier days.'

'You have ever, Sir,' replied ſhe, 'been kind to 'me, and it adds to my pain, that I ſhall never have 'an opportunity of ſharing that happineſs you promiſe. 'Happineſs, I fear, is no longer reſerved for me here; 'and I long to be rid of a place where I have only 'found diſtreſs. Indeed, Sir, I wiſh you would make 'a proper ſubmiſſion to Mr. Thornhill; it may, in

ſome meaſure, induce him to pity you; and it will give me relief in dying.'

'Never, child,' replied I, 'never will I be 'brought to acknowledge my daughter a proſtitute; 'for though the world may look upon your offence 'with ſcorn, let it be mine to regard it as a mark 'of credulity, not of guilt. My dear, I am no 'ways miſerable in this place, however diſmal it 'may ſeem; and be aſſured, that while you continue 'to bleſs me by living, he ſhall never have my con'ſent to make you more wretched by marrying an'other.'

After the departure of my daughter, my fellow-priſoner, who was by at this interview, ſenſibly enough expoſtulated upon my obſtinacy, in refuſing a ſubmiſſion which promiſed to give me freedom. He obſerved, that the reſt of the family were not to be ſacrificed to the peace of one child alone, and ſhe the only one who had offended me. 'Beſide,' added he, 'I don't know 'if it be juſt thus to obſtruct the union of man and 'wife, which you do at preſent, by refuſing to con'ſent to a match which you cannot hinder, but may 'render unhappy.'

'Sir,' replied I, 'you are unacquainted with the 'man that oppreſſes us. I am very ſenſible that no 'ſubmiſſion I can make could procure me liberty even 'for an hour. I am told, that even in this very 'room, a debtor of his, no later than laſt year, died 'for want. But though my ſubmiſſion and approba'tion could transfer me from hence to the moſt beau'tiful apartment he is poſſeſſed of: yet I would grant 'neither, as ſomething whiſpers me, that it would be 'giving a ſanction to adultery. While my daughter 'lives, no other marriage of his ſhall ever be legal in 'my eye. Were ſhe removed, indeed, I ſhould be 'the baſeſt of men, from any reſentment of my own, 'to attempt putting aſunder thoſe who wiſh for an 'union. No, villain as he is, I ſhould then wiſh him 'married, to prevent the conſequences of his future debaucheries,

'debaucheries. But now ſhould I not be the moſt 'cruel of all fathers, to ſign an inſtrument which muſt 'ſend my child to the grave, merely to avoid a priſon 'myſelf: and thus to eſcape one pang, break my 'child's heart with a thouſand.'

He acquieſced in the juſtice of this anſwer, but could not avoid obſerving, that he feared my daughter's life was already too much waſted to keep me long a priſoner. 'However,' continued he, 'though you 'refuſe to ſubmit to the nephew, I hope you have 'no objections to laying your caſe before the uncle, 'who has the firſt character in the kingdom for every 'thing that is juſt and good. I would adviſe you 'to ſend him a letter by the poſt, intimating all his 'nephew's ill uſage, and my life for it, that in three 'days you ſhall have an anſwer.' I thanked him for the hint, and inſtantly ſet about complying; but I wanted paper, and unluckily all our money had been laid out that morning in proviſions; however, he ſupplied me.

For the three enſuing days I was in a ſtate of anxiety, to know what reception my letter might meet with; but in the mean time was frequently ſolicited by my wife to ſubmit to any conditions rather than remain here, and every hour received repeated accounts of the decline of my daughter's health. The third day and the fourth arrived, but I received no anſwer to my letter: the complaints of a ſtranger againſt a favourite nephew were no way likely to ſucceed; ſo that theſe hopes ſoon vaniſhed like all my former. My mind, however, ſtill ſupported itſelf, though confinement and bad air began to make a viſible alteration in my health, and my arm that had ſuffered in the fire grew worſe. My children, however, ſat by me, and while I was ſtretched on my ſtraw, read to me by turns, or liſtened and wept at my inſtructions. But my daughter's health declining faſter than mine, every meſſage from her contributed to increaſe my apprehenſions and pain. The fifth

morning

morning after I had written the letter which was ſent Mr. William Thornhill, I was alarmed with an account that ſhe was ſpeechleſs. Now it was that confinement was truly painful to me; my ſoul was burſting from it's priſon to be near the pillow of my child, to comfort, to ſtrengthen her, to receive her laſt wiſhes, and teach her ſoul the way to heaven! Another account came; ſhe was expiring, and yet I was debarred the ſmall comfort of weeping by her. My fellow-priſoner ſome time after came with the laſt account. He bade me be patient; ſhe was dead! The next morning he returned, and found me with my two little ones, now my only companions, who were uſing all their innocent efforts to comfort me. They intreated to read to me, and bade me not cry, for I was now too old to weep. 'And is not my ſiſter an angel 'now papa,' cried the eldeſt, 'and why then are you 'ſorry for her? I wiſh I were an angel out of this 'frightful place, if my papa were with me.'---'Yes,' added my youngeſt darling, 'heaven, where my ſiſter 'is, is a finer place than this, and there are none but 'good people there, and the people here are very 'bad.'

Mr. Jenkinſon interrupted their harmleſs prattle, by obſerving, that now my daughter was no more I ſhould ſeriouſly think of the reſt of my family, and attempt to ſave my own life, which was every day declining for want of neceſſaries and wholeſome air. He added, that it was now incumbent on me to ſacrifice any pride or reſentment of my own to the welfare of thoſe who depended on me for ſupport; and that I was now, both by reaſon and juſtice, obliged to try to reconcile my landlord.

'Heaven be praiſed,' replied I, 'there is no pride 'left me now. I ſhould deteſt my own heart, if 'I ſaw either pride or reſentment lurking there. 'On the contrary, as my oppreſſor has been once 'my pariſhioner, I hope one day to preſent him up 'an unpolluted ſoul at the eternal tribunal. No,

'Sir,

'Sir, I have no resentment now; and though he 'has taken from me what I held dearer than all 'his treasures, though he has wrung my heart, for 'I am sick almost to fainting, very sick, my fellow 'prisoner, yet that shall never inspire me with vengeance. I am now willing to approve his marriage, and if this submission can do him any pleasure, let him know, that if I have done him any 'injury I am sorry for it.' Mr. Jenkinson took pen and ink, and wrote down my submission nearly as I have expressed it, to which I signed my name. My son was employed to carry the letter to Mr. Thornhill, who was then at his seat in the country. He went, and in about six hours returned with a verbal answer. He had some difficulty, he said, to get a sight of his landlord, as the servants were insolent and suspicious; but he accidentally saw him as he was going out upon business, preparing for his marriage, which was to be in three days. He continued to inform us, that he stept up in the humblest manner, and delivered the letter, which, when Mr. Thornhill had read, he said that all submission was now too late and unnecessary; that he had heard of our application to his uncle, which met with the contempt it deserved; and as for the rest, that all future applications should be directed to his attorney, not to him. He observed however, that as he had a very good opinion of the discretion of the two young ladies, they might have been the most agreeable intercessors.

'Well, Sir,' said I to my fellow-prisoner, 'you 'now discover the temper of the man who oppresses 'me. He can at once be facetious and cruel; but 'let him use me as he will, I shall soon be free, in 'spite of all his bolts to restrain me. I am now 'drawing towards an abode that looks brighter as 'I approach it: this expectation chears my afflictions, 'and though I leave an helpless family of orphans 'behind me, yet they will not be utterly forsaken;

'some

'some friend, perhaps, will be found to assist them 'for the sake of their poor father, and some may cha-'ritably relieve them for the sake of their Heavenly 'father.'

Just as I spoke, my wife, whom I had not seen that day before, appeared with looks of terror, and making efforts, but unable to speak, 'Why, my 'love,' cried I, 'why will you thus increase my 'afflictions by your own? What though no sub-'mission can turn our severe master, though he has 'doomed me to die in this place of wretchedness, 'and though we have lost a darling child, yet still 'you will find comfort in your other children when 'I shall be no more.'-------'We have indeed lost,' returned she, 'a darling child. My Sophia, my 'dearest, is gone: snatched from us, carried off by 'ruffians!'

'How, Madam,' cried my fellow-prisoner, 'Miss 'Sophia carried off by villains! Sure it cannot be!'

She could only answer with a fixed look, and a flood of tears. But one of the prisoner's wives, who was present, and came in with her, gave us a more distinct account; she informed us, that as my wife, my daughter, and herself, were taking a walk together on the great road, a little way out of the village, a post-chaise and pair drove up to them, and instantly stopt. Upon which a well drest man, but not Mr. Thornhill, stepping out, clasped my daughter round the waist, and forcing her in, bid the postilion drive on, so that they were out of sight in a moment.

'Now,' cried I, 'the sum of my miseries is made 'up, nor is it in the power of any thing on earth to 'give me another pang. What! not one left! not 'leave me one! the monster! the child that was 'next my heart! she had the beauty of an angel, 'and almost the wisdom of an angel. But sup-'port that woman, nor let her fall. Not to leave 'me one!'------'Alas, my husband,' said my wife,

'you

'you ſeem to want comfort even more than I. Our 'diſtreſſes are great; but I could bear this and more, 'if I ſaw you but eaſy. They may take away 'my children, and all the world, if they leave me 'but you.'

My ſon, who was preſent, endeavoured to moderate our grief? he bade us take comfort, for he hoped that we might ſtill have reaſon to be thankful.-------- 'My child,' cried I, 'look round the world, and 'ſee if there be any happineſs left me now. Is not 'every ray of comfort ſhut out; while all our bright 'proſpects only lie beyond the grave.' 'My dear 'father,' returned he, 'I hope there is ſtill ſomething 'that will give you an interval of ſatisfaction; for 'I have a letter from my brother George.'----'What 'of him my child,' interrupted I, 'does he know 'our miſery? I hope my boy is exempt from any part 'of what his wretched family ſuffers?' 'Yes, Sir,' returned he, he is perfectly gay, chearful and happy.

His letter brings nothing but good news; he is 'the favourite of his colonel, who promiſes to pro'cure him the very next lieutenancy that becomes 'vacant!'

'And you are ſure of this,' cried my wife; 'are 'you ſure that nothing ill has befallen my boy?------' 'Nothing indeed, Madam,' returned my ſon; 'you 'ſhall ſee the letter, which will give you the higheſt 'pleaſure: and if any thing can procure you com'fort, I am ſure that will.'——'But are you ſure,' ſtill repeated ſhe, 'that the letter is from himſelf, 'and that he is really ſo happy?'-----'Yes, Madam,' replied he, 'it is certainly his, and he will one day 'be the credit and the ſupport of our family!'---- 'Then I thank Providence,' cried ſhe, 'that my laſt 'letter to him has miſcarried! Yes, my dear,' continued ſhe, turning to me, 'I will now confeſs, that 'though the hand of Heaven is ſore upon us, in other 'inſtances, it has been favourable here. By the laſt 'letter I wrote my ſon, which was in the bitterneſs of

'anger,

'anger I desired him, upon his mother's blessing, and 'if he had the heart of a man, to see justice done his 'father and sister, and avenge our cause. But thanks 'be to Him who directs all things, it has miscarried, 'and I am at rest.'---'Woman,' cried I, 'thou hast 'done very ill, and at another time my reproaches 'might have been more severe. Oh! what a tre-'mendous gulph hast thou escaped, that would have 'buried both thee and him in endless ruin. Provi-'dence, indeed, has here been kinder to us than we to 'ourselves. It has reserved that son to be the father 'and protector of my children when I shall be away. 'How unjustly did I complain of being stript of 'every comfort, when still I hear that he is happy, 'and insensible of our afflictions; still kept in reserve 'to support his widowed mother, and to protect 'his brothers and sisters. But what sisters has he 'left? he has no sisters now, they are all gone, rob-'bed from me, and I am undone!'---'Father,' inter-rupted my son, 'I beg you will give me leave to read 'his letter, I know it will please you.' Upon which with my permission he read as follows;

'HONOURED SIR,

'I Have called off my imagination a few moments 'from the pleasures that surround me, to fix it 'upon objects, that are still more pleasing, the dear 'little fire side at home. My fancy draws that harm-'less groupe as listening to every line of this with 'great composure. I view those faces with delight, 'which never felt the deforming hand of ambition or 'distress! But whatever your happiness may be at 'home, I am sure it will be some addition to it, to 'hear that I am perfectly pleased with my situation, 'and every way happy here.

'Our regiment is countermanded, and is not to 'leave the kingdom; the colonel, who professes him-'self my friend, takes me with him to all companies 'where he is acquainted; and after my first visit, I 'generally find myself received with increased respect

'upon repeating it. I danced laſt night with Lady 'G------, and could I forget you know whom, I 'might be perhaps ſucceſsful. But it is my fate 'ſtill to remember others, while I am myſelf for-'gotten by moſt of my abſent friends; and in this 'number, I fear, Sir, that I muſt conſider you, for 'I have long expected the pleaſure of a letter from 'home to no purpoſe. Olivia and Sophia too pro-'miſed to write, but ſeem to have forgotten me. Tell 'them they are two arrant little baggages, and that 'I am this moment in a moſt violent paſſion with 'them: yet ſtill, I know not how, though I want 'to bluſter a little, my heart is reſpondent only to 'ſofter emotions. Then tell them, Sir, that after 'all, I love them affectionately; and be aſſured of 'my ever remaining your dutiful ſon.'

'In all our miſery,' cried I, 'what thanks have 'we not to return, that one at leaſt of our family is 'exempted from what we ſuffer. Heaven be his guard 'and keep my boy thus happy to be the ſupport of 'his widowed mother, and the father of theſe two 'babes, which is all the patrimony I can now be-'queath him! May he keep their innocence from the 'temptations of want, and be their conductor in the 'paths of honour!' I had ſcarce ſaid theſe words, when a noiſe, like that of a tumult, ſeemed to proceed from the priſon below; it died away ſoon after, and a clanking of fetters was heard along the paſ-ſage that led to my apartment. The keeper of the priſon entered, holding a man all bloody, wounded, and fettered with the heavieſt irons. I looked with compaſſion on the wretch as he approached me, but with horror, when I found it was my own ſon. 'My 'George! my George! and do I behold thee thus 'Wounded! fettered! Is this thy happineſs! Is this 'the manner you return to me? O that this ſight 'could break my heart at once, and let me die!

'Where, Sir, is your fortitude?' returned my ſon with

with an intrepid voice; 'I muſt ſuffer; my life is for-
'feited, and let them take it.'

I tried to reſtrain my paſſion for a few minutes in ſilence, but I thought I ſhould have died with the effort. 'O, my boy, my heart weeps to behold thee 'thus, and I cannot, cannot help it. In the mo-'ment that I thought thee bleſt, and prayed for thy 'ſafety, to behold thee thus again! chained, wounded. 'And yet the death of the youthful is happy. But 'I am old, a very old man, and have lived to ſee 'this day. To ſee my children all untimely falling 'about me, while I continue a wretched ſurvivor in 'the midſt of ruin! May all the curſes that ever ſunk 'a ſoul, fall heavy upon the murderer of my children. 'May he live, like me, to ſee----'

'Hold, Sir,' replied my ſon, 'or I ſhall bluſh for 'thee. How, Sir, forgetful of your age, your holy 'calling, thus to arrogate the juſtice of Heaven, and 'fling thoſe curſes upward that muſt ſoon deſcend to 'cruſh thy own grey head with deſtruction! No, Sir, 'let it be your care now to fit me for that vile death I 'muſt ſhortly ſuffer, to arm me with hope and re-'ſolution, to give me courage to drink of that bitter-'neſs which muſt ſhortly be my portion.'

'My child, you muſt not die: I am ſure no offence 'of thine can deſerve ſo vile a puniſhment. My 'George could never be guilty of any crime to make 'his anceſtors aſhamed of him.'

'Mine, Sir,' returned my ſon, 'is, I fear, an un-'pardonable one. When I received my mother's letter 'from home, I immediately came down, determined 'to puniſh the betrayer of our honour, and ſent him 'an order to meet me, which he anſwered, not in 'perſon, but by diſpatching four of his domeſtics to 'ſeize me. I wounded one who firſt aſſaulted me, 'and, I fear, deſperately: but the reſt made me their 'priſoner. The coward is determined to put the law 'in execution againſt me; the proofs are undeniable; 'I have ſent a challenge; and as I am the firſt tranſ-

‘ greſſor upon the ſtatute, I ſee no hopes of pardon.
‘ But you have often charmed me with your leſſons
‘ of fortitude; let me now, Sir, find them in your
‘ example.’

‘ And, my ſon, you ſhall find them. I am now
‘ raiſed above this world, and all the pleaſures it can
‘ produce. From this moment I break from my
‘ heart all the ties that held it down to earth, and
‘ will prepare to fit us both for eternity. Yes, my
‘ ſon, I will point out the way, and my ſoul ſhall
‘ guide yours in the aſcent, for we will take our flight
‘ together. I now ſee and am convinced you can expect
‘ no pardon here, and I can only exhort you to ſeek
‘ it at that greateſt tribunal where we both ſhall
‘ ſhortly anſwer. But let us not be niggardly in our
‘ exhortation, but let all our fellow priſoners have a
‘ ſhare.---Good gaoler, let them be permitted to ſtand
‘ here, while I attempt to improve them.’ Thus
ſaying, I made an effort to riſe from my ſtraw, but
wanted ſtrength, and was able only to recline againſt
the wall. The priſoners aſſembled according to my
directions, for they loved to hear my counſel; my
ſon and his mother ſupported me on either ſide; I
looked, and ſaw that none were wanting, and then
addreſſed them with the following exhortation.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The equal dealings of Providence demonſtrated with regard to the happy and the miſerable here below. That from the nature of pleaſure and pain, the wretched muſt be repaid the balance of their ſufferings in the life hereafter.

'MY friends, my children, and fellow-ſufferers, 'when I reflect on the diſtribution of good and 'evil here below, I find that much has been given 'man to enjoy, yet ſtill more to ſuffer. Though we 'ſhould examine the whole world, we ſhall not find 'one man ſo happy as to have nothing left to wiſh 'for: but we daily ſee thouſands, who by ſuicide 'ſhew us they have nothing left to hope. In this life 'then it appears that we cannot be entirely bleſt; 'but yet we may be completely miſerable.

'Why man ſhould thus feel pain, why our wretch-'edneſs ſhould be requiſite in the formation of uni-'verſal felicity, why, when all other ſyſtems are made 'perfect by the perfection of their ſubordinate parts, 'the great ſyſtem ſhould require for its perfection, 'parts that are not only ſubordinate to others, but 'imperfect in themſelves: Theſe are queſtions that 'never can be explained, and might be uſeleſs if 'known. On this ſubject Providence has thought 'fit to elude our curioſity, ſatisfied with granting us 'motives to conſolation.

'In this ſituation, man has called in the friendly 'aſſiſtance of philoſophy, and Heaven, ſeeing the in-'capacity of that to conſole him, has given him the 'aid of religion. The conſolations of philoſophy 'are very amuſing, but often fallacious. It tells us 'that life is filled with comforts, if we will but enjoy 'them: and, on the other hand, that though we una-'voidably have miſeries here, life is ſhort, and they 'will ſoon be over. Thus do theſe conſolations de-'ſtroy each other; for if life is a place of comfort,

'it's ſhortneſs muſt be miſery; and if it be long, 'our griefs are protracted. Thus philoſophy is weak; 'but religion comforts in an higher ſtrain. Man is 'here, it tells us, fitting up his mind, and preparing 'it for another abode. When the good man leaves 'the body, and is all a glorious mind, he will find 'he has been making himſelf a heaven of happineſs 'here; while the wretch, that has been maimed and 'contaminated by his vices, ſhrinks from his body 'with terror, and finds that he has anticipated the 'vengeance of heaven. To religion, then, we muſt 'hold, in every circumſtance of our life, for our 'trueſt comfort: for if already we are happy, it is a 'pleaſure to think that we can make that happineſs 'unending; and if we are miſerable, it is very con-'ſoling to think that there is a place of reſt. Thus, 'to the fortunate, religion holds out a continuance of 'bliſs; to the wretched, a change from pain.

'But though religion is very kind to all men, it 'has promiſed peculiar rewards to the unhappy; the 'ſick, the naked, the houſeleſs, the heavy-laden, 'and the priſoner, have ever moſt frequent promiſes 'in our ſacred law. The Author of our religion 'every where profeſſes himſelf the wretch's friend; 'and, unlike the falſe ones of this world, beſtows 'all his careſſes upon the forlorn. The unthinking 'have cenſured this as a partiality, as a preference, 'without merit to deſerve it. But they never reflect, 'that it is not in the power of even Heaven itſelf to 'make the offer of unceaſing felicity as great a gift 'to the happy as to the miſerable. To the firſt, eternity 'is but a ſingle bleſſing, ſince, at moſt, it but in-'creaſes what they already poſſeſs. To the latter, it 'is a double advantage; for it diminiſhes their pain 'here, and rewards them with heavenly bliſs here-'after.

'But Providence is in another reſpect kinder to 'the poor than the rich; for as it thus makes the life 'after death more deſirable, ſo it ſmooths the paſſage

'there. The wretched have had a long familiarity 'with every face of terror. The man of ſorrows lays 'himſelf quietly down, with no poſſeſſions to regret, 'and but few ties to ſtop his departure: he feels only 'nature's pang in the final ſeparation, and this is 'no way greater than he has often fainted under 'before; for, after a certain degree of pain, every 'new breach that death opens in the conſtitution, 'nature kindly covers with inſenſibility.

'Thus Providence has given the wretched two ad-'vantages over the happy in this life, greater felicity 'in dying, and in heaven, all that ſuperiority of 'pleaſure which ariſes from contraſted enjoyment. 'And this ſuperiority, my friends, is no ſmall ad-'vantage, and ſeems to be one of the pleaſures of the 'poor man in the parable; for though he was already 'in heaven, and felt all the raptures it could give, 'yet it was mentioned, as an addition to his happineſs, 'that he had once been wretched, and now was com-'forted; that he had known what it was to be 'miſerable, and now felt what it was to be happy.

'Thus, my friends, you ſee religion does what phi-'loſophy could never do: it ſhews the equal dealings 'of heaven to the happy and the unhappy, and levels 'all human enjoyments to nearly the ſame ſtandard. 'It gives to both rich and poor the ſame happineſs 'hereafter, and equal hopes to aſpire after it; but if 'the rich have the advantage of enjoying pleaſures here, 'the poor have the endleſs ſatisfaction of knowing 'what it was once to be miſerable, when crowned 'with endleſs felicity hereafter; and even though it 'ſhould be called a ſmall advantage, yet being an 'eternal one, it muſt make up by duration what the 'temporal happineſs of the great may have exceeded 'by inteníeneſs.

'Theſe are therefore the conſolations which the 'wretched have peculiar to themſelves, and in which 'they are above the reſt of mankind; in other re-'ſpects they are below them. They who would know

'the

'the miſeries of the poor, muſt ſee life and endure it.
'To declaim on the temporal advantages they enjoy,
'is only repeating what none either believe or practiſe.
'The men who have the neceſſaries of living are
'not poor, and they who want them muſt be miſerable.
'Yes, my friends, we muſt be miſerable. No vain
'efforts of a refined imagination can ſooth the wants
'of nature, can give elaſtic ſweetneſs to the dark
'vapour of a dungeon, or eaſe the throbbings of a
'broken heart. Let the philoſopher from his couch
'of ſoftneſs tell us we can reſiſt all theſe. Alas;
'the effort by which we reſiſt them is ſtill the greateſt
'pain. Death is ſlight, and any man may ſuſtain
'it; but torments are dreadful, and theſe no man can
'endure.

'To us, then, my friends, the promiſes of happineſs in heaven ſhould be peculiarly dear; for if our reward be in this life alone, we are indeed of all men the moſt miſerable. When I look round theſe gloomy walls, made to terrify, as well as to confine us; this light, that only ſerves to ſhew the horrors of the place; thoſe ſhackles, that tyranny has impoſed, or crime made neceſſary; when I ſurvey theſe emaciated looks, and hear thoſe groans, O, my friends, what a glorious exchange would heaven be for theſe! To fly through regions unconfined as air, to baſk in the ſunſhine of eternal bliſs, to carol over endleſs hymns of praiſe, to have no maſter to threaten or inſult us, but the form of goodneſs for ever in our eyes; when I think of theſe things, death becomes the meſſenger of very glad tidings; when I think of theſe things, his ſharpeſt arrow becomes the ſtaff of my ſupport: when I think of theſe things, what is there in life worth having? When I think of theſe things, what is there that ſhould not be ſpurned away? Kings in their palaces ſhould groan for ſuch advantages; but we, humbled as we are, ſhould yearn for them.

'And

'And ſhall theſe things be ours? Ours they will certainly be, if we but try for them; and what is a comfort, we are ſhut out from many temptations that would retard our purſuit. Only let us try for them, and they will certainly be ours; and what is ſtill a comfort, ſhortly too: for if we look back on paſt life, it appears but a very ſhort ſpan, and whatever we may think of the reſt of life, it will yet be found of leſs duration; as we grow older, the days ſeem to grow ſhorter, and our intimacy with time ever leſſens the perception of his ſtay. Then let us take comfort now, for we ſhall ſoon be at our journey's end; we ſhall ſoon lay down the heavy burden laid by heaven upon us; and though death, the only friend of the wretched, for a little while mocks the weary traveller with the view, and, like the horizon, ſtill flies before him; yet the time will certainly and ſhortly come, when we ſhall ceaſe from our toil; when the luxurious great ones of the world ſhall no more tread us to the earth; when we ſhall think with pleaſure on our ſufferings below; when we ſhall be ſurrounded with all our friends, or ſuch as deſerved our friendſhip; when our bliſs ſhall be unutterable, and ſtill, to crown all, unending.'

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Happier prospects begin to appear. Let us be inflexible, and fortune will at last change in our favour.

WHEN I had thus finished, and my audience was retired, the gaoler, who was one of the most humane of his profession, hoped I would not be displeased, as what he did was but his duty; observing that he must be obliged to remove my son into a stronger cell, but he should be permitted to visit me every morning. I thanked him for his clemency, and grasping my boy's hand, bade him farewell, and be mindful of the great duty that was before him.

I again, therefore, laid me down, and one of my little ones sate by my bedside reading, when Mr. Jenkinson entering, informed me that there was news of my daughter; for that she was seen by a person, about two hours before, in a strange gentleman's company, and that they had stopped at a neighbouring village for refreshment, and seemed as if returning to town. He had scarce delivered this news, when the gaoler came, with looks of haste and pleasure, to inform me that my daughter was found. Moses came running in a moment after, crying out that his sister Sophy was below, and coming up with our old friend Mr. Burchell.

Just as he delivered this news, my dearest girl entered, and, with looks almost wild with pleasure, ran to kiss me in a transport of affection. Her mother's tears and silence also shewed her pleasure. 'Here, 'papa,' cried the charming girl, 'here is the brave 'man to whom I owe my delivery; to this gentleman's 'intrepidity I am indebted for my happiness and 'safety.'---A kiss from Mr. Burchell, whose pleasure seemed even greater than her's, interrupted what she was going to add.

'Ah, Mr. Burchell,' cried I, 'this is but a 'wretched habitation you now find us in; and we

'are

'are now very different from what you laſt ſaw us.
'You were ever our friend: we have long diſcovered
'our errors with regard to you, and repented of our
'ingratitude. After the vile uſage you then received
'at my hands, I am almoſt aſhamed to behold your
'face; yet I hope you'll forgive me, as I was de-
'ceived by a baſe, ungenerous wretch, who, under
'the maſk of friendſhip, has undone me.'

'It is impoſſible,' replied Mr. Burchell, 'that I
'ſhould forgive you, as you never deſerved my reſent-
'ment. I partly ſaw your deluſion then, and as it
'was out of my power to reſtrain, I could only pity
'it!'

'It was ever my conjecture,' cried I, 'that your
'mind was noble; but now I find it ſo.---But tell
'me, my dear child, how thou haſt been relieved, or
'who the ruffians were that carried thee away?'

'Indeed, Sir,' replied ſhe, 'as to the villain who
'carried me off, I am yet ignorant. For as my ma-
'ma and I were walking out, he came behind us,
'and almoſt before I could call for help, forced me
'into the poſt-chaiſe, and in an inſtant the horſes
'drove away. I met ſeveral on the road, to whom I
'cried out for aſſiſtance; but they diſregarded my
'entreaties. In the mean time the ruffian himſelf
'uſed every art to hinder me from crying out: he
'flattered and threatened me by turns, and ſwore
'that if I continued but ſilent, he intended no harm.
'In the mean time, I had broken the canvas that he
'had drawn up, and whom ſhould I perceive, at ſome
'diſtance, but your old friend Mr. Burchell, walking
'along with his uſual ſwiftneſs, with the great ſtick
'for which we uſed ſo much to ridicule him. As
'ſoon as we came within hearing, I called out to
'him by name, and entreated his help. I repeated
'my exclamations ſeveral times; upon which, with
'a very loud voice, he bid the poſtilion ſtop; but
'the boy took no notice, but drove on with ſtill
'greater ſpeed. I now thought he could never over-

'take

'take us, when, in leſs than a minute, I ſaw Mr. 'Burchell come running up by the ſide of the horſes, 'and, with one blow, knock the poſtilion to the 'ground. The horſes, when he was fallen, ſoon ſtopt 'of themſelves; and the ruffian, ſtepping out, with 'oaths and menaces, drew his ſword, and ordered 'him at his peril to retire; but Mr. Burchell, run-'ning up, ſhivered his ſword to pieces, and then 'purſued him for near a quarter of a mile: but he 'made his eſcape. I was at this time come out my-'ſelf, willing to aſſiſt my deliverer; but he ſoon re-'turned to me in triumph. The poſtilion, who was 'recovered, was going to make his eſcape too; but 'Mr. Burchell ordered him at his peril to drive back 'to town. Finding it impoſſible to reſiſt, he re-'luctantly complied, though the wound he had re-'ceived ſeemed, to me at leaſt, to be dangerous. He 'continued to complain of the pain as we drove 'along, ſo that he at laſt excited Mr. Burchell's com-'paſſion; who, at my requeſt, exchanged him for 'another at an inn where we called on our return.'

'Welcome, then,' cried I, 'my child, and thou, 'her gallant deliverer, a thouſand welcomes. Though 'our chear is but wretched, yet our hearts are ready 'to receive you. And now, Mr. Burchell, as you 'have delivered my girl, if you think her a recom-'pence, ſhe is your's; if you can ſtoop to an alli-'ance with a family ſo poor as mine, take her, ob-'tain her conſent, as I know you have her heart, 'and you have mine. And let me tell you, Sir, that 'I give you no ſmall treaſure; ſhe has been celebrated 'for beauty, it is true, but that is not my meaning, 'I give you up a treaſure in her mind.'

'But I ſuppoſe, Sir,' cried Mr. Burchell, 'that 'you are apprized of my circumſtances, and of my 'incapacity to ſupport her as ſhe deſerves?'

'If your preſent objection,' replied I, 'be meant 'as an evaſion of my offer, I deſiſt; but I know no 'man ſo worthy to deſerve her as you; and, if I

'could

'could give her thousands, and thousands sought her 'from me, yet my honest, brave Burchell should be 'my dearest choice.'

To all this his silence alone seemed to give a mortifying refusal; and without the least reply to my offer, he demanded if we could not be furnished with refreshments from the next inn; to which being answered in the affirmative, he ordered them to send in the best dinner that could be provided upon such short notice. He bespoke also a dozen of their best wine, and some cordials for me. Adding, with a smile, that he would stretch a little for once; and, though in a prison, asserted he was never better disposed to be merry. The waiter soon made his appearance with preparations for dinner; a table was lent us by the gaoler, who seemed remarkably assiduous, the wine was disposed in order, and two very well dressed dishes were brought in.

My daughter had not yet heard of her poor brother's melancholy situation, and we all seemed unwilling to damp her chearfulness by the relation. But it was in vain that I attempted to appear chearful, the circumstances of my unfortunate son broke through all efforts to dissemble; so that I was at last obliged to damp our mirth by relating his misfortunes, and wishing he might be permitted to share with us in this little interval of satisfaction. After my guests were recovered from the consternation my account had produced, I requested also that Mr. Jenkinson, a fellow prisoner, might be admitted; and the gaoler granted my request with an air of unusual submission. The clanking of my son's irons was no sooner heard along the passage, than his sister ran impatiently to meet him; while Mr. Burchell, in the mean time, asked me if my son's name was George? to which replying in the affirmative, he still continued silent. As soon as my boy came into the room, I could perceive he regarded Mr. Burchell with a look of astonishment and reverence. 'Come on,' cried I, 'my

'son; though we are fallen very low, yet Providence 'has been pleased to grant us some small relaxation 'from pain. Thy sister is restored to us, and there 'is her deliverer: to that brave man it is that I am 'indebted for yet having a daughter; give him, my 'boy, the hand of friendship, he deserves our warmest 'gratitude.'

My son seemed all this while regardless of what I said, and still continued fixed at a respectful distance. 'My dear brother,' cried his sister, 'why don't you 'thank my good deliverer? the brave should ever love 'each other.'

He still continued his silence and astonishment; till our guest at last perceived himself to be known, and, assuming all his native dignity, desired my son to come forward. Never before had I seen any thing so truly majestic as the air he assumed upon this occasion. The greatest object in the universe, says a certain philosopher, is a good man struggling with adversity; yet there is still a greater, which is the good man that comes to relieve it. After he had regarded my son for some time with a superior air, 'I again 'find,' said he, 'unthinking boy, that the same 'crime'---But here he was interrupted by one of the gaoler's servants, who came to inform us that a person of distinction, who had driven into town with a chariot and several attendants, sent his respects to the gentleman that was with us, and begged to know when he should think proper to be waited upon. 'Bid the fellow wait,' cried our guest, 'till I shall 'have leisure to receive him;' and then turning to my son, 'I again find, Sir,' proceeded he, 'that you 'are guilty of the same offence for which you once 'had my reproof, and for which the law is now pre'paring its justest punishments. You imagine, per'haps, that contempt for your own life gives you a 'right to take that of another: but where, Sir, is 'the difference between a duellist, who hazards a life 'of no value, and the murderer who acts with greater 'security?

'security? Is it any diminution of the gameſter's
'fraud, when he alledges that he has ſtaked a coun-
'ter?'

'Alas, Sir,' cried I, 'whoever you are, pity the
'poor miſguided creature; for what he has done was
'in obedience to a deluded mother, who, in the bit-
'terneſs of her reſentment, required him upon her
'bleſſing to avenge her quarrel. Here, Sir, is the
'letter, which will ſerve to convince you of her im-
'prudence, and diminiſh his guilt.'

He took the letter, and haſtily read it over. 'This,
ſays he, 'though not a perfect excuſe, is ſuch a pal-
'liation of his fault, as induces me to forgive him.--
'And now, Sir,' continued he, kindly taking my ſon
by the hand, 'I ſee you are ſurprized at finding me
'here; but I have often viſited priſons upon occa-
'ſions leſs intereſting. I am now come to ſee juſtice
'done a worthy man, for whom I have the moſt ſin-
'cere eſteem. I have long been a diſguiſed ſpectator
'of thy father's benevolence. I have at his little
'dwelling enjoyed reſpect uncontaminated by flattery,
'and have received that happineſs that courts could
'not give, from the amuſing ſimplicity round his fire-
'ſide. My nephew has been apprized of my inten-
'tions of coming here, and, I find, is arrived; it
'would be wronging him and you to condemn him
'without examination; if there be injury there ſhall
'be redreſs; and this I may ſay without boaſting,
'that none have ever taxed the injuſtice of Sir Wil-
'liam Thornhill.'

We now found the perſonage whom we had long
entertained as an harmleſs, amuſing companion, was
no other than the celebrated Sir William Thornhill,
to whoſe virtues and ſingularities ſcarce any were
ſtrangers. The poor Mr. Burchell was in reality a
man of large fortune and great intereſt, to whom ſe-
nates liſtened with applauſe, and whom party heard
with conviction; who was the friend of his country,
but loyal to his king. My poor wife, recollecting her

former familiarity, ſeemed to ſhrink with apprehenſion; but Sophia, who a few moments before thought him her own, now perceiving the immenſe diſtance to which he was removed by fortune, was unable to conceal her tears.

'Ah, Sir,' cried my wife, with a piteous aſpect, 'how is it poſſible that I can ever have your forgiveneſs; the ſlights you received from me the laſt time I had the honour of ſeeing you at our houſe, and the jokes which I audaciouſly threw out; theſe, Sir, I fear, can never be forgiven.'

'My dear, good lady,' returned he with a ſmile, 'if you had your joke, I had my anſwer; I'll leave it to all the company if mine were not as good as your's. To ſay the truth, I know nobody whom I am diſpoſed to be angry with at preſent but the fellow who ſo frighted my little girl here. I had not even time to examine the raſcal's perſon, ſo as to deſcribe him in an advertiſement. Can you tell me, Sophia, my dear, whether you ſhould know him again?'

'Indeed, Sir,' replied ſhe, I can't be poſitive; 'yet now I recollect, he had a large mark over one of his eye-brows.' 'I aſk pardon, Madam,' interrupted Jenkinſon, who was by, 'but be ſo good as to inform me if the fellow wore his own red hair?'---'Yes, I think ſo,' cried Sophia.---'And did your honour,' continued he, turning to Sir William, 'obſerve the length of his legs?'--'I can't be ſure of their length,' cried the baronet, 'but I am convinced of their ſwiftneſs; for he out-ran me, which is what I thought few men in the kingdom could have done.'---'Pleaſe your honour,' cried Jenkinſon, 'I know the man; it is certainly the ſame; the beſt runner in England; he has beaten Pinwire of Newcaſtle: Timothy Baxter is his name, I know him perfectly, and the very place of his retreat this moment. If your honour will bid Mr. Gaoler let two of his men go with me, I'll engage

'to

'to produce him to you in an hour at fartheſt.' Upon this the gaoler was called, who inſtantly appearing, Sir William demanded if he knew him. 'Yes, 'pleaſe your honour,' replied the gaoler, 'I know 'Sir William Thornhill well, and every body that 'knows any thing of him will deſire to know more 'of him.' 'Well, then,' ſaid the baronet, 'my 'requeſt is, that you will permit this man and two 'of your ſervants to go upon a meſſage by my autho-'rity, and, as I am in the commiſſion of the peace, I 'undertake to ſecure you.'---'Your promiſe is ſuffi-'cient,' replied the other, 'and you may at a mi-'nute's warning ſend them over England whenever 'your honour thinks fit.'

In purſuance of the gaoler's compliance, Jenkinſon was diſpatched in ſearch of Timothy Baxter, while we were amuſed with the aſſiduity of our youngeſt boy Bill, who had juſt come in and climbed up to Sir William's neck in order to kiſs him. His mother was immediately going to chaſtiſe his familiarity, but the worthy man prevented her, and taking the child, all ragged as he was, upon his knee, 'What, 'Bill, you chubby rogue,' cried he, 'do you remem-'ber your old friend Burchell? and Dick too, my 'honeſt veteran, are you here? you ſhall find I have 'not forgot you.' So ſaying, he gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows eat very heartily, as they had got that morning but a very ſcanty breakfaſt.

We now ſat down to dinner, which was almoſt cold: but previouſly, my arm ſtill continuing painful, Sir William wrote a preſcription, for he had made the ſtudy of phyſic his amuſement, and was more than moderately ſkilled in the profeſſion: this being ſent to an apothecary who lived in the place, my arm was dreſſed, and I found almoſt inſtantaneous relief. We were waited upon at dinner by the gaoler himſelf, who was willing to do our gueſt all the honour in his power. But before we had well dined,

another meſſage was brought from his nephew, deſiring permiſſion to appear, in order to vindicate his innocence and honour; with which requeſt the baronet complied, and deſired Mr. Thornhill to be introduced.

CHAP. XII.

Former benevolence now repaid with unexpected intereſt.

MR. Thornhill made his entrance with a ſmile, which he ſeldom wanted, and was going to embrace his uncle, which the other repulſed with an air of diſdain. 'No fawning, Sir, at preſent,' cried the baronet, with a look of ſeverity, 'the only way to 'my heart is by the road of honour; but here I ſee 'only complicated inſtances of falſehood, cowardice 'and oppreſſion. How, is it, Sir, that this poor 'man, for whom I know you profeſſed a friendſhip, 'is uſed thus hardly? His daughter vilely ſeduced, 'as a recompence for his hoſpitality, and he himſelf 'thrown into priſon, perhaps but for reſenting the 'inſult? His ſon too, whom you feared to face as a 'man---'

'Is it poſſible, Sir,' interrupted his nephew, 'that my uncle ſhould object that as a crime, which 'his repeated inſtructions alone have perſuaded me to 'avoid?'

'Your rebuke,' cried Sir William, 'is juſt; you 'have acted in this inſtance prudently and well, 'though not quite as your father would have done: 'my brother indeed was the ſoul of honour; but thou '------yes, you have acted in this inſtance perfectly 'right, and it has my warmeſt approbation.'

'And I hope,' ſaid the nephew, 'that the reſt of 'my conduct will not be found to deſerve cenſure. 'I appeared, Sir, with this gentleman's daughter at 'ſome places of public amuſement; thus what was 'levity, ſcandal called by a harſher name, and it was 'reported I had debauched her. I waited on her father in perſon, willing to clear the thing to his ſatiſ-

'faction,

'faction, and he received me only with insult and 'abuse. As for the rest, with regard to his being 'here, my attorney and steward can best inform you, 'as I commit the management of business entirely to 'them. If he has contracted debts, and is unwil- 'ling, or even unable to pay them, it is their busi- 'ness to proceed in this manner; and I see no hard- 'ship or injustice in pursuing the most legal means of 'redress.'

'If this,' cried Sir William, 'be as you have 'stated it, there is nothing unpardonable in your of- 'fences; and though your conduct might have been 'more generous, in not suffering this gentleman to 'be oppressed by subordinate tyranny, yet it has been 'at least equitable.'

'He cannot contradict a single particular,' replied the 'squire, 'I defy him to do so, and several of my 'servants are ready to attest what I say. Thus, Sir,' continued he, finding that I was silent, for in fact I could not contradict him; 'thus, Sir, my own inno- 'cence is vindicated: but though, at your entreaty, 'I am ready to forgive this gentleman every other of- 'fence, yet his attempts to lessen me in your esteem, 'excite a resentment that I cannot govern; and this 'too at a time when his son was actually preparing 'to take away my life; this, I say, was such guilt, 'that I am determined to let the law take its course. 'I have here the challenge that was sent me, and two 'witnesses to prove it; one of my servants has been 'wounded dangerously; and even though my uncle 'himself should dissuade me, which I know he will 'not, yet I will see public justice done, and he shall 'suffer for it.'

'Thou monster,' cried my wife, 'hast thou not 'had vengeance enough already, but must my poor 'boy feel thy cruelty? I hope that good Sir William 'will protect us, for my son is as innocent as a child; 'I am sure he is, and never did harm to man.'

'Madam,' replied the good man, 'your wishes for

'his

'his safety are not greater than mine; but I am sorry 'to find his guilt too plain; and if my nephew per'sists---' But the appearance of Jenkinson and the gaoler's two servants now called off our attention, who entered hauling in a tall man, very genteelly drest, and answering the description already given of the ruffian who carried off my daughter---'Here,' cried Jenkinson, pulling him in, 'here, we have him, and 'if ever there was a candidate for Tyburn, this is 'one.'

The moment Mr. Thornhill perceived the prisoner, and Jenkinson, who had him in custody, he seemed to shrink backward with terror. His face became pale with conscious guilt, and he would have withdrawn; but Jenkinson, who perceived his design, stopt him. 'What, 'squire,' cried he, 'are you 'ashamed of your two old acquaintances, Jenkinson 'and Baxter? But this is the way that all great men 'forget their friends, though I am resolved we will not 'forget you. Our prisoner, please your honour,' continued he, turning to Sir William, 'has already 'confessed all. This is the gentleman reported to be 'dangerously wounded: he declares that it was Mr. 'Thornhill who first put him upon this affair; that 'he gave him the clothes he now wears, to appear 'like a gentleman, and furnished him with a post'chaise. The plan was laid between them, that he 'should carry off the young lady to a place of safety, 'and that there he should threaten and terrify her; 'but Mr. Thornhill was to come in, in the mean 'time, as if by accident, to her rescue, and that they 'should fight awhile, and then he was to have run off, 'by which means Mr. Thornhill would have the bet'ter opportunity of gaining her affections himself, 'under the character of her defender.

Sir William remembered the coat to have been frequently worn by his nephew, and all the rest the prisoner himself confirmed by a more circumstantial account; and concluding, that Mr. Thornhill had often

declared

declared to him, that he was in love with both fifters at the fame time.

'Heaven,' cried Sir William, 'what a viper have 'I been foftering in my bofom! And fo fond of public 'juftice too as he feemed to be! But he fhall have it; 'fecure him, Mr. Gaoler---yet hold, I fear there is 'not legal evidence to detain him.'

Upon this, Mr. Thornhill, with the utmoft humility, entreated that two fuch abandoned wretches might not be admitted as evidence againft him, but that his fervants fhould be examined. 'Your fervants!' replied Sir William; 'wretch, call them 'your's no longer: but come; let us hear what 'thofe fellows have to fay; let his butler be called.'

When the butler was introduced, he foon perceived by his former mafter's looks, that all his power was now over. 'Tell me,' cried Sir William fternly, 'have you ever feen your mafter, and that fellow 'dreffed up in his clothes, in company together?' 'Yes, pleafe your honour,' cried the butler, 'a 'thoufand times: he was the man that always brought 'him his ladies.' 'How,' interrupted young Mr. Thornhill, 'this to my face!'---'Yes,' replied the butler, 'or to any man's face. To tell you a 'truth, Mafter Thornhill, I never either loved you 'or liked you, and I don't care if I tell you now a 'piece of my mind.'---'Now then,' cried Jenkinfon, 'tell his honour whether you know any thing of me.' ---'I can't fay,' replied the butler, 'that I know 'much good of you. The night that gentleman's 'daughter was deluded to our houfe, you were one of them.'---'So then,' cried Sir William, 'I find you 'have brought a very fine witnefs to prove your inno- 'cence: thou ftain to humanity! to affociate with 'fuch wretches!---But (continuing his examination), 'you tell me, Mr. Butler, that this was the perfon 'who brought him this old gentleman's daughter.'-- 'No, pleafe your honour,' replied the butler, 'he 'did not bring her, for the 'fquire himfelf undertook

'that

'that business; but he brought the priest that pre-'tended to marry them.'---'It is but too true,' cried Jenkinson, 'I cannot deny it; that was the employ-'ment assigned to me, and I confess it to my confu-'sion.'

'Good heavens!' exclaimed the baronet, 'how 'every new discovery of his villainy alarms me! all 'his guilt is now too plain, and I find his present 'prosecution was dictated by tyranny, cowardice, 'and revenge; at my request, Mr. Gaoler, set this 'young officer, now your prisoner, free, and trust to 'me for the consequences. I'll make it my business 'to set the affair in a proper light to my friend the 'magistrate who has committed him. But where is 'the unfortunate young lady herself? let her appear to 'confront this wretch; I long to know by what arts 'he has seduced her. Intreat her to come in. Where 'is she?'

'Ah! Sir,' said I, 'that question stings me to the 'heart; I was once indeed happy in a daughter, but 'her miseries'---Another interruption here prevented me; for who should make her appearance but Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was the next day to have been married to Mr. Thornhill. Nothing could equal her surprize at seeing Sir William and his nephew here before her, for her arrival was quite accidental. It happended that she and the old gentleman her father were passing through the town, on the way to her aunt's, who had insisted that her nuptials with Mr. Thornhill should be consummated at her house; but stopping for refreshment, they put up at an inn at the other end of the town. It was there from the window that the young lady happened to observe one of my little boys playing in the street, and instantly sending a footman to bring the child to her, she learnt from him some account of our misfortunes; but was still kept ignorant of young Mr. Thornhill's being the cause. Though her father made several remonstrances on the impropriety of her going to a prison to visit us, yet they

were

were ineffectual: ſhe deſired the child to conduct her, which he did, and it was thus ſhe ſurprized us at a juncture ſo unexpected.

Nor can I go on, without a reflection on thoſe accidental meetings, which, though they happen every day, ſeldom excite our ſurprize but upon ſome extraordinary occaſion. To what a fortuitous concurrence do we not owe every pleaſure and convenience of our lives! How many ſeeming accidents muſt unite before we can be clothed or fed! The peaſant muſt be diſpoſed to labour, the ſhower muſt fall, the wind fill the merchant's ſail, or numbers muſt want the uſual ſupply.

We all continued ſilent for ſome moments, while my charming pupil, which was the name I generally gave this young lady, united in her looks compaſſion and aſtoniſhment, which give new finiſhing to her beauty. 'Indeed, my dear Mr. Thornhill,' cried ſhe to the 'ſquire, who ſhe ſuppoſed was come here to ſuccour, and not to oppreſs us, 'I take it a little unkindly that you ſhould come here without me, or never inform me of the ſituation of a family ſo dear to us both: you know I ſhould take as much pleaſure in contributing to the relief of my reverend old maſter here, whom I ſhall ever eſteem, as you can. But I find that, like your uncle, you take a pleaſure in doing good in ſecret.'

'He find pleaſure in doing good!' cried Sir William, interrupting her; 'no, my dear, his pleaſures are as baſe as he is. You ſee in him, Madam, as compleat a villain as ever diſgraced humanity. A wretch, who, after having deluded this poor man's daughter, after plotting againſt the innocence of her ſiſter, has thrown the father into priſon, and the eldeſt ſon into fetters, becauſe he had the courage to face his betrayer. And, give me leave, Madam, now to congratulate you upon an eſcape from the embraces of ſuch a monſter.'

'O goodneſs,' cried the lovely girl, 'how have I

'been

'been deceived! Mr. Thornhill informed me for cer-
'tain, that this gentleman's eldeſt ſon, Captain Prim-
'roſe, was gone off to America with his new married
'lady.'

'My ſweeteſt Miſs,' cried my wife, 'he has told
'you nothing but falſehoods. My ſon George never
'left the kingdom, nor never was marrried. Though
'you have forſaken him, he has always loved you too
'well to think of any body elſe; and I have heard him
'ſay he would die a batchelor for your ſake.' She then proceeded to expatiate upon the ſincerity of her ſon's paſſion; ſhe ſet his duel with Mr. Thornhill in a proper light; from thence ſhe made a rapid digreſſion to the 'ſquire's debaucheries, his pretended marriages, and ended with a moſt inſulting picture of his cowardice.

'Good Heavens!' cried Miſs Wilmot, 'how very
'near have I been to the brink of ruin! But how great
'is my pleaſure to have eſcaped it! Ten thouſand
'falſehoods has this gentleman told me! He had at
'laſt art enough to perſuade me that my promiſe to the
'only man I eſteemed was no longer binding, ſince he
'had been unfaithful. By his falſehoods I was taught
'to deteſt one equally brave and generous!'

But by this time my ſon was freed from the incumbrances of juſtice, as the perſon ſuppoſed to be wounded was detected to be an impoſtor. Mr. Jenkinſon alſo, who had acted as his valet de chambre, had dreſſed up his hair, and furniſhed him with whatever was neceſſary to make a genteel appearance. He now, therefore, entered, handſomely dreſſed in his regimentals, and, without vanity (for I am above it) he appeared as handſome a fellow as ever wore a military dreſs. As he entered, he made Miſs Wilmot a modeſt and diſtant bow, for he was not yet acquainted with the change which the eloquence of his mother had wrought in his favour. But no decorums could reſtrain the impatience of his bluſhing miſtreſs to be forgiven. Her tears, her looks, all contributed to diſcover the real ſenſations

of

of her heart, for having forgotten her former promiſe, and having ſuffered herſelf to be deluded by an impoſtor. My ſon appeared amazed at her condeſcenſion, and could ſcarce believe it real.---' Sure, Madam,' cried he, ' this is but deluſion! I can never have merited this! To be bleſt thus is to be too happy.'--- ' No, Sir,' replied ſhe, ' I have been deceived, baſely ' deceived, elſe nothing could have ever made me unjuſt to my promiſe. You know my friendſhip, you ' have long known it; but forget what I have done, ' and as you once had my warmeſt vows of conſtancy, ' you ſhall now have them repeated; and be aſſured, ' that if your Arabella cannot be your's, ſhe ſhall never be another's.'---' And no other's you ſhall be,' cried Sir William, ' if I have any influence with your ' father.'

This hint was ſufficient for my ſon Moſes, who immediately flew to the inn where the old gentleman was, to inform him of every circumſtance that had happened. But in the mean time the 'ſquire, perceiving that he was on every ſide undone, now finding that no hopes were left from flattery or diſſimulation, concluded that his wiſeſt way would be to turn and face his purſuers. Thus, laying aſide all ſhame, he appeared the open and hardy villain. ' I find then,' cried he, ' that I am to expect no juſtice here; but I am reſolved it ſhall be done me. You ſhall know, Sir,' turning to Sir William, ' I am no longer a poor dependant upon your favours. I ſcorn them. Nothing can keep Miſs Wilmot's fortune from me, ' which, I thank her father's aſſiduity, is pretty ' large. The articles, and a bond for her fortune, ' are ſigned, and ſafe in my poſſeſſion. It was her ' fortune, not her perſon, that induced me to wiſh ' for this match; and poſſeſſed of the one, let who will ' take the other.'

This was an alarming blow; Sir William was ſenſible of the juſtneſs of his claims, for he had been inſtrumental in drawing up the marriage-articles him-

felf. Mifs Wilmot, therefore, perceiving that her fortune was irretrievably loft, turning to my fon, fhe afked if the lofs of fortune could leffen her value to him? 'Though fortune,' faid fhe, 'is out of my 'power, at leaft I have my hand to give.'

'And that, Madam,' cried her real lover, 'was, 'indeed, all that you ever had to give: at leaft, all I 'ever thought worth the acceptance. And, I now 'proteft, my Arabella, by all that's happy, your 'want of fortune this moment encreafes my pleafure, 'as it ferves to convince my fweet girl of my fincerity.'

Mr. Wilmot now entering, he feemed not a little pleafed at the danger his daughter had juft efcaped, and readily confented to a diffolution of the match. But, finding that her fortune, which was fecured to Mr. Thornhill by bond, would not be given up, nothing could exceed his difappointment. He now faw that his money muft all go to enrich one who had no fortune of his own. He could bear his being a rafcal, but to want an equivalent to his daughter's fortune was wormwood. He fat, therefore, for fome minutes, employed in the moft mortifying fpeculation, till Sir William attempted to leffen his anxiety. 'I 'muft confefs, Sir,' cried he, 'that your prefent dif'appointment does not entirely difpleafe me. You 'immoderate paffion for wealth is now juftly punifhed. 'But though the young lady cannot be rich, fhe has 'ftill a fufficient competence to give content. Here 'you fee an honeft young foldier, who is willing to 'take her without fortune; they have long loved each 'other; and, for the friendfhip I bear his father, my 'intereft fhall not be wanting in his promotion. 'Leave, then, that ambition which difappoints you, 'and for once admit that happinefs which courts your 'acceptance.'

'Sir William,' replied the old gentleman, 'be af'fured I never yet forced her inclinations, nor will 'now. If fhe ftill continues to love this young gentl'man, let her have him with all my heart. Th

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'is ſtill, thank Heaven, ſome fortune left, and your 'promiſe will make it ſomething more. Only let my 'old friend here (meaning me) give me a promiſe of 'ſettling ſix thouſand pounds upon my girl, if ever 'he ſhould come to his fortune, and I am ready this 'night to be the firſt to join them together.'

As it now remained with me to make the young couple happy, I readily gave a promiſe of making the ſettlement he required: which, to one who had ſuch little expectations as I, was no great favour. We had now therefore the ſatisfaction of ſeeing them fly into each other's arms in a tranſport. 'After all 'my misfortunes,' cried my ſon George, 'to be thus 'rewarded! Sure this is more than I could ever have 'preſumed to hope for. To be poſſeſſed of all that's 'good, and after ſuch an interval of pain! my warmeſt 'wiſhes could never riſe ſo high!' 'Yes, my George,' returned his lovely bride, 'now let the wretch take 'my fortune; ſince you are happy without it, ſo am 'I. O what an exchange have I made, from the baſeſt 'of men to the deareſt, bleſt! Let him enjoy 'our fortune, I now can be happy even in indigence.' 'And I promiſe you,' cried the 'ſquire, with a malicious grin, 'that I ſhall be very happy with what you 'deſpiſe.' 'Hold, hold, Sir,' cried Jenkinſon, 'there are two words to that bargain. As for that 'lady's fortune, Sir, you ſhall never touch a ſingle 'ſtiver of it.'---Pray, your honour,' continued he to Sir William, 'can the 'ſquire have this lady's fortune 'if he be married to another?' 'How can you make 'ſuch a ſimple demand?' replied the baronet; 'undoubtedly he cannot.'---'I am ſorry for that,' cried Jenkinſon; 'for as we have been fellow-ſporters, I 'have a friendſhip for him. But I muſt declare, well 'as I love him, that his contract is not worth a to'bacco ſtopper, for he is married already.'---'You 'lie like a raſcal,' returned the 'ſquire, who ſeemed 'raized by this inſult; 'I never was legally married to 'any woman.'---'Indeed, begging your honour's par-

 'don,'

'don,' replied the other, 'you were: and I hope you 'will ſhew a proper return of friendſhip to your honeſt 'Jenkinſon, who brings you a wife; and if the com- 'pany reſtrain their curioſity a few minutes, they ſhall 'ſee her.' So ſaying, he went off with his uſual celerity, and left us all unable to form any probable conjecture of his deſign. 'Aye, let him go,' cried the 'ſquire; 'whatever elſe I may have done, I defy him 'there. I am too old now to be frightened with 'ſquibs.'

'I am ſurprized,' ſaid the baronet, 'what the fel- 'low can intend by this. Some low piece of humour, 'I ſuppoſe!'---'Perhaps, Sir,' replied I, 'he may 'have a more ſerious meaning. For when we reflect 'on the various ſchemes this gentleman had laid to 'ſeduce innocence, perhaps ſome one more artful than 'the reſt, has been found able to deceive him. When 'we conſider what numbers he has ruined, how many 'parents now feel with anguiſh the infamy and 'the contamination which he has brought into their 'families, it would not ſurprize me if ſome of them-- 'Amazement! Do I ſee my loſt daughter! Do I hold 'her! It is, it is, my life, my happineſs. I thought 'thee loſt, my Olivia, yet ſtill I hold thee, and ſtill 'thou ſhalt live to bleſs me.' The warmeſt tranſports of the fondeſt lover were not greater than mine, when I ſaw him introduce my child, and held my daughter in my arms, whoſe ſilence only ſpoke her raptures. 'And art thou returned to me, my darling,' cried I, 'to be my comfort in age!'---'That ſhe is,' cried Jenkinſon, 'and make much of her, for ſhe is your 'own honourable child, and as honeſt a woman as 'any in the whole room, let the other be who ſhe 'will.---And as for you, 'ſquire, as ſure as you ſtand 'there, this young lady is your lawful wedded wife. 'And to convince you that I ſpeak nothing but the 'truth, here is the licence by which you were married 'together.' So ſaying, he put the licence into the baronet's hands, who read it, and found it perfect in

'every

every respect. ‘ And now gentlemen,’ continued he, ‘ I find that you are surprized at all this; but a very ‘ few words will explain the difficulty. That there ‘ 'squire of renown, for whom I have a great friendship, ‘ but that's between ourselves, has often employed ‘ me in doing odd little things for him. Among the ‘ rest, he commissioned me to procure him a false licence ‘ and a false priest, in order to deceive this young lady. ‘ But as I was very much his friend, what did I do ‘ but go and get a true licence and a true priest, and ‘ marry them both as fast as the cloth could make ‘ them. Perhaps you'll think it was generosity made ‘ me do all this. But no: to my shame I confess ‘ it, my only design was to keep the licence, and let ‘ the 'squire know that I could prove it upon him ‘ whenever I thought proper, and so make him come ‘ down whenever I wanted money.’ A burst of pleasure now seemed to fill the whole apartment; our joy even reached to the common room, where the prisoners themselves sympathized,

And shook their chains
In transport and rude harmony.

Happiness was expanded upon every face, and even Olivia's cheeks seemed flushed with pleasure. To be thus restored to reputation, to friends and fortune at once, was a rapture sufficient to stop the progress of decay, and restore former health and vivacity. But perhaps among all, there was not one who felt sincerer pleasure than I. Still holding the dear loved child in my arms, I asked my heart if these transports were not delusive. ‘ How could you,’ cried I, turning to Jenkinson, ‘ how could you add to my miseries by the ‘ story of her death? But it matters not; my pleasure ‘ at finding her again is more than a recompence for ‘ the pain.’

‘ As to your question,’ replied Jenkinson, ‘ that is ‘ easily answered. I thought the only probable means ‘ of freeing you from prison, was by submitting to ‘ the 'squire, and consenting to his marriage with the

'other young lady. But these you had vowed never
'to grant while your daughter was living, there
'was therefore no other method to bring things to
'bear, but by persuading you that she was dead.
'I prevailed on your wife to join in the deceit, and
'we have not had a fit opportunity of undeceiving
'you till now.'

In the whole assembly now there appeared only two faces that did not glow with transport. Mr. Thornhill's assurance had entirely forsaken him; he now saw the gulph of infamy and want before him, and trembled to take the plunge. He therefore fell on his knees before his uncle, and in a voice of piercing misery, implored compassion. Sir William was going to spurn him away, but at my request he raised him, and, after pausing a few moments, 'Thy vices, 'crimes, and ingratitude,' cried he, 'deserve no tender-'ness; yet thou shalt not be entirely forsaken; a bare 'competence shall be supplied to support the wants of 'life, but not its follies. This young lady, thy 'wife, shall be put in possession of a third part of 'that fortune, which once was thine, and from her 'tenderness alone thou art to expect any extraordinary 'supplies for the future.' He was going to express his gratitude for such kindness in a set speech; but the baronet prevented him, by bidding him not aggravate his meanness, which was already but too apparent. He ordered him at the same time to be gone, and from all his former domestics to chuse one, such as he should think proper, which was all that should be granted to attend him.

As soon as he left us, Sir William very politely stept up to his new niece with a smile, and wished her joy. His example was followed by Miss Wilmot and her father; my wife too kissed her daughter with much affection, as, to use her own expression, she was now made an honest woman of. Sophia and Moses followed in turn, and even our benefactor Jenkinson desired to be admitted to that honour. Our satisfaction

seemed

ſeemed ſcarce capable of increaſe. Sir William, whoſe greateſt pleaſure was in doing good, now looked round, with a countenance open as the ſun, and ſaw nothing but joy in the looks of all, except that of my daughter Sophia, who, for ſome reaſons we could not comprehend, did not ſeem perfectly ſatisfied. 'I 'think now,' cried he, with a ſmile, 'that all the 'company, except one or two, ſeem perfectly happy. 'There only remains an act of juſtice for me to do. 'You are ſenſible, Sir,' continued he, turning to me, 'of the obligations we both owe Mr. Jenkinſon. 'And it is but juſt we ſhould both reward him for 'it. Miſs Sophia will, I am ſure, make him very 'happy, and he ſhall have from me five hundred 'pounds as her fortune, and upon this, I am ſure, 'they can live very comfortably together. Come, 'Miſs Sophia, what ſay you to this match of my 'making? Will you have him?' My poor girl ſeemed almoſt ſinking into her mother's arms at the hideous propoſal. 'Have him, Sir!' cried ſhe faintly: 'No Sir, never.'---'What,' cried he again, 'Not Mr. 'Jenkinſon, your benefactor, a handſome young fel-'low, with five hundred pounds and good expec-'tations!'---'I beg, Sir,' returned ſhe, ſcarce able to ſpeak, 'that you'll deſiſt, and not make me ſo very 'wretched.'---'Was ever ſuch obſtinacy known,' cried he again, 'to refuſe a man whom the family has 'ſuch infinite obligations to, who has preſerved your 'ſiſter, and who has five hundred pounds! What, not 'have him!' 'No, Sir, never,' replied ſhe angrily; 'I'd ſooner die firſt.'---'If that be the caſe then,' cried he, 'if you will not have him---I think I muſt 'have you myſelf.' And ſo ſaying, he caught her to his breaſt with ardour. 'My lovelieſt, my moſt 'ſenſible of girls,' cried he, 'how could you ever think 'your own Burchell could deceive you, or that Sir 'William Thornhill could ever ceaſe to admire a 'miſtreſs that loved him for himſelf alone? I have 'ſome years ſought for a woman, who, a ſtranger to my

'fortune,

'fortune, could think that I had merit as a man. Afte
'having tried in vain, even among the pert and the
'ugly, how great at laſt muſt be my rapture, to have
'made a conqueſt over ſuch ſenſe and ſuch heavenly
'beauty!' Then turning to Jenkinſon, 'As I cannot,
'Sir, part with this young lady myſelf, for ſhe has
'taken a fancy to the cut of my face, all the recom-
'pence I can make is to give you her fortune, and
'you may call upon my ſteward to-morrow for five
'hundred pounds.' Thus we had all our compli-
ments to repeat, and Lady Thornhill underwent the
ſame round of ceremony that her ſiſter had done be-
fore. In the mean time, Sir William's gentleman ap-
peared, to tell us that the equipages were ready to carr
us to the inn, where every thing was prepared fo
our reception. My wife and I led the van, and lef
thoſe gloomy manſions of ſorrow. The generou
baronet ordered forty pounds to be diſtributed amon
the priſoners, and Mr. Wilmot, induced by his ex-
ample, gave half that ſum. We were received below
by the ſhouts of the villagers, and I ſaw and ſhook
by the hand two or three of my honeſt pariſhioners
who were among the number. They attended us to
our inn, where a ſumptuous entertainment was pro-
vided, and coarſer proviſions diſtributed in grea
quantities among the populace.

After ſupper, as my ſpirits were exhauſted by th
alteration of pleaſure and pain which they had ſuſ
tained during the day, I aſked permiſſion to withdraw
and leaving the company in the midſt of their mirth
as ſoon as I found myſelf alone, I poured out my hea
in gratitude to the Giver of joy as well as ſorrow, an
then ſlept undiſturbed till morning.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

The Conclusion.

THE next morning as soon as I awaked, I found my eldeſt ſon ſitting at my bedſide, who came to increaſe my joy with another turn of fortune in my favour. Firſt having releaſed me from the ſettlement that I had made the day before in his favour, he let me know that my merchant who had failed in town was arreſted at Antwerp, and there had given up effects to a much greater amount than what was due to his creditors. My boy's generoſity pleaſed me almoſt as much as this unlooked-for good fortune. But I had ſome doubts whether I ought in juſtice to accept his offer. While I was pondering upon this, Sir William entered the room, to whom I communicated my doubts. His opinion was, that as my ſon was already poſſeſſed of a very affluent fortune by his marriage, I might accept his offer without any heſitation. His buſineſs, however, was to inform me, that as he had the night before ſent for the licences, and expected them every hour, he hoped that I would not refuſe my aſſiſtance in making all the company happy that morning. A footman entered while we were ſpeaking, to tell us that the meſſenger was returned; and as I was by this time ready, I went down, where I found all the company as merry as affluence and innocence could make them. However, as they were now preparing for a very ſolemn ceremony, their laughter entirely diſpleaſed me. I told them of the grave, becoming, and ſublime deportment, they ſhould aſſume upon this myſtical occaſion, and read them two homilies and a theſis of my own compoſing, in order to prepare them. Yet they ſtill ſeemed perfectly refractory and ungovernable. Even as we were going along to church, to which I led the way, all gravity had quite forſaken them, and I was often tempted to

turn

turn back in indignation. In church a new dilemma arose, which promised no easy solution. This was which couple should be married first; my son's bride warmly insisted that Lady Thornhill (that was to be) should take the lead: but this the other refused with equal ardour, protesting she would not be guilty of such rudeness for the world. The argument was supported for some time between both with equal obstinacy, and good breeding. But as I stood all this time with my book ready, I was at last quite tired of the contest, and shutting it, 'I perceive,' cried I, 'that 'none of you have a mind to be married, and I think 'we had as good go back again; for I suppose there 'will be no business done here to day.' This at once reduced them to reason. The baronet and his lady were first married, and then my son and his lovely partner.

I had previously that morning given orders that a coach should be sent for my honest neighbour Flamborough, and his family, by which means, upon our return to the inn, we had the pleasure of finding the two Miss Flamboroughs alighted before us. Mr. Jenkinson gave his hand to the eldest, and my son Moses led up the other (and I have since found that he has taken a real liking to the girl, and my consent and bounty he shall have whenever he thinks proper to demand them). We were no sooner returned to the inn, but numbers of my parishioners, hearing of my success, came to congratulate me, but among the rest were those who rose to rescue me, and whom I formerly rebuked with such sharpness. I told the story to Sir William, my son-in-law, who went out and reproved them with great severity; but finding them quite disheartened by this harsh reproof, he gave them half a guinea a-piece to drink his health, and raise their dejected spirits.

Soon after this we were called to a very genteel entertainment, which was dressed by Mr. Thornhill's

cook.

cook. And it may not be improper to obſerve, with reſpect to that gentleman, that he now reſides in quality of companion at a relation's houſe, being very well liked, and ſeldom ſitting at the ſide-table, except when there is no room at the other; for they make no ſtranger of him. His time is pretty much taken up in keeping his relation, who is a little melancholy, in ſpirits, and in learning to blow the French horn. My eldeſt daughter, however, ſtill remembers him with regret; and ſhe has even told me, though I make a great ſecret of it, that when he reforms, ſhe may be brought to relent. But to return, for I am not apt to digreſs thus; when we were to ſit down to dinner, our ceremonies were going to be renewed. The queſtion was, whether my eldeſt daughter, as being a matron, ſhould not ſit above the two young brides: but the debate was cut ſhort by my ſon George, who propoſed that the company ſhould ſet indiſcriminately, every gentleman by his lady. This was received with great approbation by all, excepting my wife, who, I could perceive, was not perfectly ſatisfied, as ſhe expected to have had the pleaſure of ſitting at the head of the table, and carving all the meat for all the company. But notwithſtanding this, it is impoſſible to deſcribe our good-humour. I can't ſay whether we had more wit amongſt us now than uſual; but I am certain we had more laughing, which anſwered the end as well. One jeſt I particularly remember; old Mr. Wilmot drinking to Moſes, whoſe head was turned another way, my ſon replied, 'Madam, I 'thank you.' Upon which the old gentleman, winking upon the reſt of the company, obſerved that he was thinking of his miſtreſs. At which jeſt I thought the two Miſs Flamboroughs would have died with laughing. As ſoon as dinner was over, according to my old cuſtom, I requeſted that the table might be taken away, to have the pleaſure of ſeeing all my family aſſembled once more by a chearful fire-ſide. My two

two little ones ſat upon each knee, the reſt of the company by their partners. I had nothing now on this ſide of the grave to wiſh for; all my cares were over, my pleaſures were unſpeakable. It now only remained, that my gratitude in good fortune ſhould exceed my former ſubmiſſion in adverſity.

END OF THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.